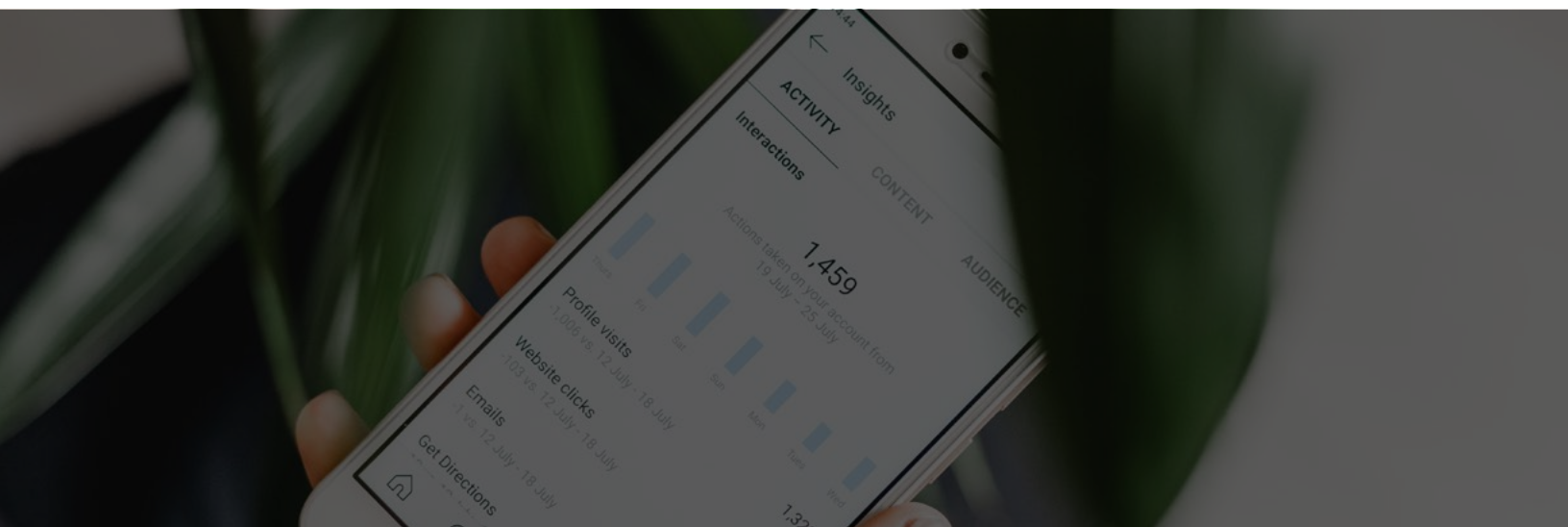




USING INSTAGRAM TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS



THE MARKEY GROUP
marketing | design | promotions | print



Whether you are a business owner or a marketing associate, surely you are aware of the power of Instagram. You likely have a personal account on your phone that you check multiple times per day.

But Instagram is more than just an app for staying entertained and sharing personal updates - it is a highly effective tool for growing your business. We are here to help you do that!

In this guide, we will cover:

- Why you should use Instagram to grow your business
- How to set up your Instagram account
- Creating content that engages your target audience
- Using hashtags effectively
- Tips for posting Instagram stories

**Still have questions after reading through this guide?
We've got your back!**

Reach out anytime for a [FREE 30 minute strategy evaluation](#). We are always happy to help you pivot your strategy to benefit your business.

WHY INSTAGRAM?

Well, to start, everyone is there - including your target audience!

Instagram is a community of billions of people from around the world. Did you know that 73% of U.S. businesses will use Instagram this year? Here are some compelling [statistics](#) about the use of Instagram:



1 Billion

people use Instagram every month



500 Million

people use Instagram Stories every single day



63%

of Instagram users log in once per day



28 min

Instagram users spend each day on the platform on average.



200 Million

users visit at least one Instagram business profile daily



1/3

of the most viewed Instagram stories are from businesses



SINCE IT'S INCEPTION,

Instagram has proven to be an extremely powerful marketing tool for businesses looking to expand their presence and boost the visibility of their products.

We've already told you that everyone is on Instagram, but here are a few more reasons why your business should be there as well:

- Businesses of ALL sizes can do well on Instagram.
- Features such as "swipe up" in stories and shoppable posts directly translate to more sales and revenue.
- You can partner with influencers to spread the word about your products or services.
- You can engage directly with your clients and your community.
- It allows you to be creative, both with posts and stories.

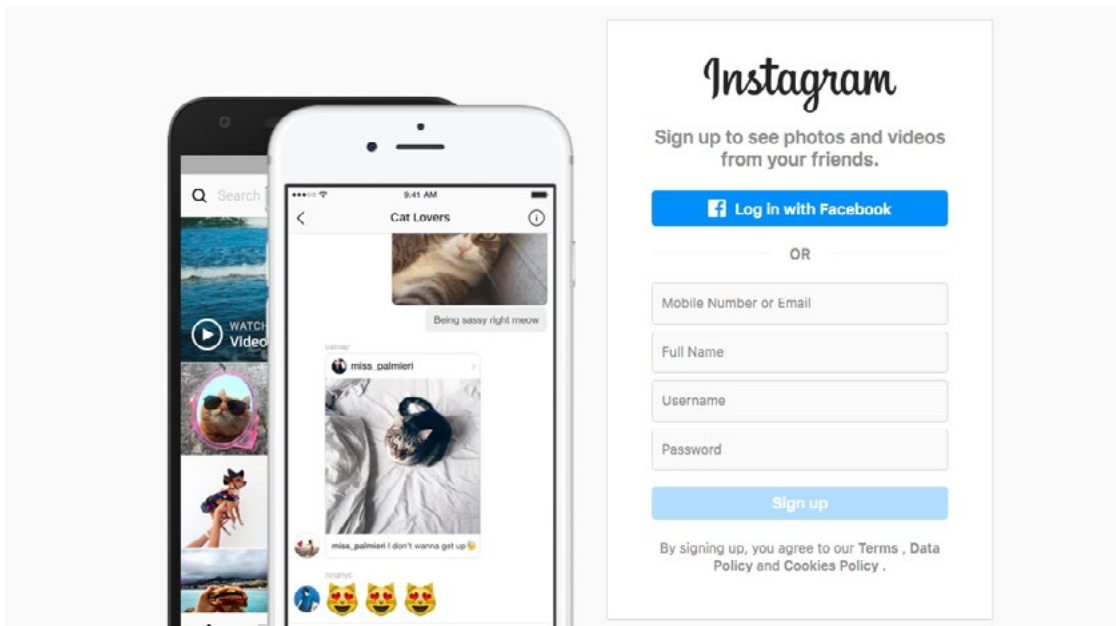
It's not too late to join and drive business impact on Instagram. With the right marketing strategy, businesses can create awareness, promote products and services, and increase sales on Instagram.

Let's get started!

GETTING STARTED ON INSTAGRAM

Creating an account on Instagram is simple.

Download the Instagram app to your phone or navigate to www.instagram.com and fill out the information to create a new account.



Two minutes later, and you're officially an Instagrammer!

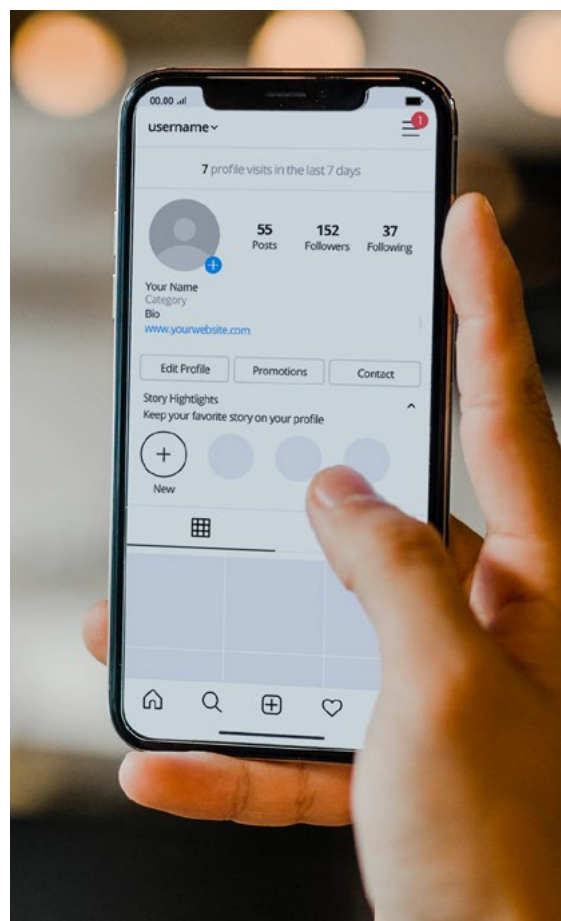
Wasn't that easy?

SETTING UP YOUR ACCOUNT

For the best user experience, we recommend setting up your account on your mobile phone app rather than your web browser. Navigate to the Instagram app, and login to your account.

From your profile page, click “Edit Profile.” Here’s what you’ll need to take care of:

- Let’s start with adding a profile picture that represents your brand. We recommend using your logo for a business profile, to help keep your brand consistent across platforms.
- Then fill in the name that will be displayed on your profile. We recommend your company name.
- Add a link to your website. This is SUPER important, as it’s a direct link to drive traffic to your site.



- You can also edit the public information and make sure you include an email and phone number as well.
- Create a short bio with information about yourself or your brand.

A quick note about the bio - take your time here!

Make sure the bio includes keywords that reflect your core values and product or service offerings. Think about what your customers would like to see and what would make people follow you. Feel free to use hashtags and emojis if appropriate.

You will also want to make sure you convert to a business account. Click the three bars in the top right corner (also known as the hamburger) and select “Settings” from the menu. Then select “Switch to Professional Account.”

Now your
Instagram
account is
officially set up!
Yay!
**It's now time for
the fun part -
posting content.**





POSTING ON INSTAGRAM

Content is king. We use this phrase time and time again when it comes to SEO, but it applies to Instagram as well.

Instagram is a visual platform, so it is crucial to think long term here. Yes, posting regularly is important - but as with all content marketing, we recommend quality over quantity.

This a platform where it is critical to think through your content strategy before publishing a single post. For example, rather than posting a decent picture everyday, consider posting a really beautiful, engaging, time-intensive photo every three days.

Regardless of your business or industry, there is an opportunity to really do this well. If you cannot afford to hire someone to handle this for you, we get it! Use your creative mind and you will do just fine.

Here are a few examples of businesses that are killing the Instagram game, some of which are not in a field where you would expect to find beautiful content - **yet they continue to deliver.**

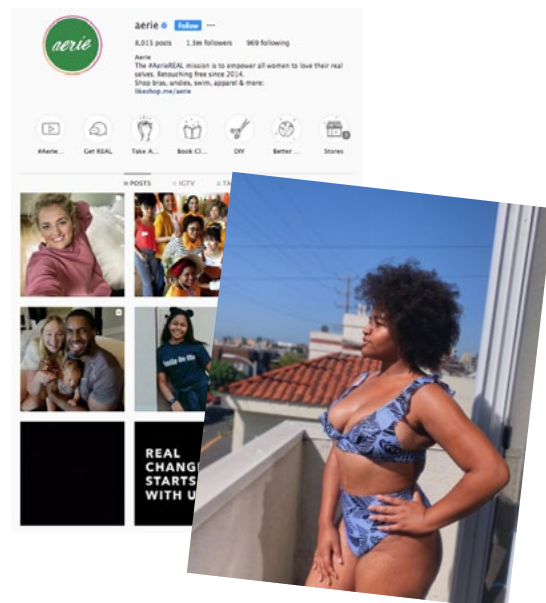
Sharpie

Who knew permanent markers could be so fun? Sharpie has done an amazing job of thinking outside the box and getting creative with their content. Sharpies sitting on a desk certainly wouldn't generate much engagement, but the amazing calligraphy, hand-drawn graphics, and creative projects that they share on their page do a great job of capturing their followers' attention.



Aerie

In 2014, Aerie committed to stop retouching photos in all marketing materials, including Instagram. As an intimate apparel retailer, this long-term focus on body positivity and inclusivity has helped set Aerie apart from nearly every single one of their competitors. It has also endeared the brand to their target audience: women of all shapes, sizes and ethnicities.



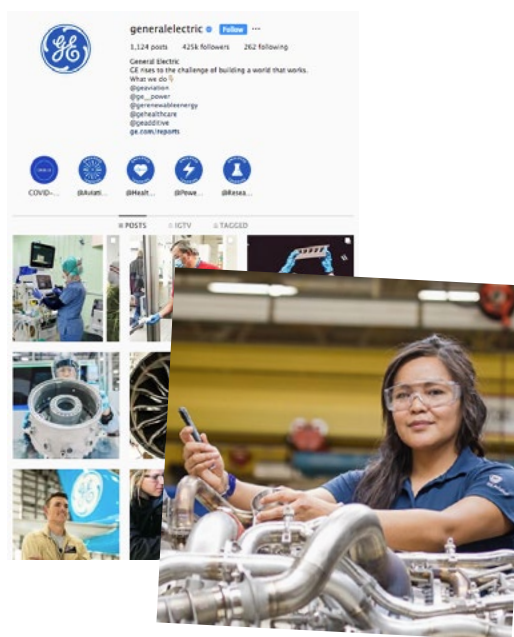
Lowe's

Home improvement isn't the most exciting industry, but you wouldn't know that looking at Lowe's Instagram page. Here you'll find happy families laughing in the kitchen, adorable dogs playing in the backyard, and sweet kids helping their parents with projects around the house. Rather than simply marketing their products, Lowe's uses Instagram to market what their products can help customers achieve: a happy home environment.



General Electric

Many consumers may not know much about General Electric, other than the fact that they manufactured some of the appliances around their house. But GE's Instagram page offers a fascinating look inside the company, including how their products are utilized by healthcare, aviation, and other industries that we all rely on everyday. They also regularly share the names of their featured employees, helping to personalize their content and drive engagement.



While these brands are all well-established, there is nothing stopping a smaller business from **using these same strategies on their own Instagram pages.**

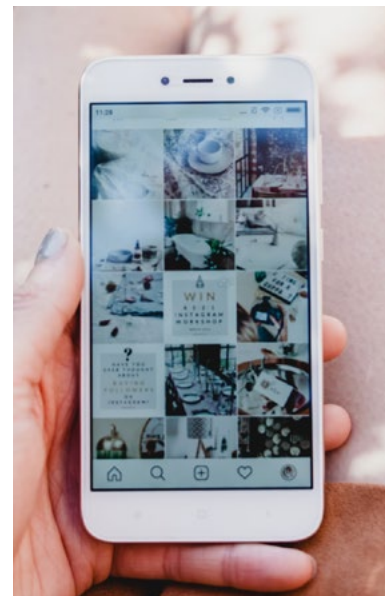
WHAT AND WHEN DO I POST?

Ultimately, the goal of using Instagram is to grow your business and drive revenue. But be careful with this mindset - if there's one thing that is sure to kill your Instagram engagement, it's posting hard sell after hard sell.

Your Instagram content should offer real value to your followers. Posting boring, uninspired product shots with a sales pitch in the caption is not the way to go about this!

Here are some tips for creating engaging Instagram content:

- Always use high-quality photos that are clear, crisp, well-lit, and professional quality (bright images generate 24% more likes than dark images!)
- Use similar filters that adhere to your brand image on all of your Instagram posts.
- Plan posts in advance to keep your Instagram grid looking cohesive and well-organized.
- Space out any posts with text on them.

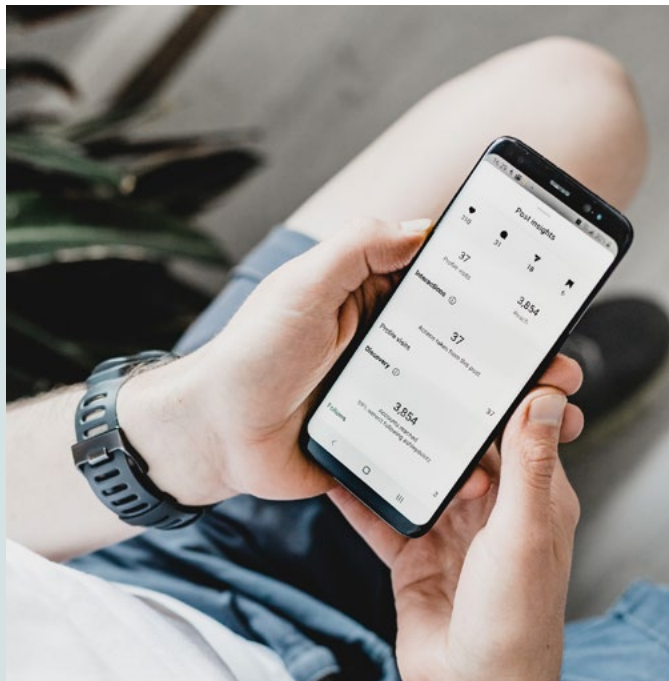


- Experiment with different types of posts, such as user-generated photos, “meet our team” and behind the scenes posts, lifestyle posts, videos, graphics, etc.
- Don’t forget about captions! Engage your audience by asking them to answer a question, share their opinion, or leave a certain emoji in the comments.
- Contests are a great way to jumpstart your engagement and grow your following, especially if your account is fairly new.
- Tag your posts to make them shoppable.

As far as when to post, we recommend picking a schedule that works for you and sticking to it. Whether you post everyday or three times per week is less important than churning out regular content your followers can rely on. On average, most brands post around five times per week.

If you have a business profile, the Instagram app offers helpful analytics on the days of the week when your posts receive the most engagement.

From your profile, click on “Insights” and then “Activity” to view your data.





USING HASHTAGS ON INSTAGRAM

Hashtags are the cornerstone of a good Instagram strategy. Why? It's simple: hashtags are a way for people to search for and find content they enjoy.

For example, I follow the hashtag #smilingdogs. Whenever a photo from this hashtag shows up in my feed, I smile. I love seeing this content! If a user or brand posts a photo with this hashtag, there is a good chance I'm going to engage with it.

Do some research to determine which hashtags your target audience is following, and brainstorm ways to make them smile with your posts.

**Here are some important things you should know
before you begin using hashtags:**

- Your profile must be set to public for people to search your hashtags.
- The more specific your hashtag, the better. For example, instead of #realtor, maybe you should try #clevelandrealtor or #rockyriverrealtor to be more specific.
- Starting a personalized hashtag is a great way to track your content, as well as encourage customers to share their product photos with you.
- Research your hashtags - look at what the competition is using and put yourself in your customer's shoes - would you search for the hashtags you are using?
- Don't be overly concerned with using the most popular hashtags. They are great to weave into the strategy, but not always necessary.
- Test and learn! Instagram provides data about how people found your post, so review this and watch for hashtag combinations that drive a large number of people.





INSTAGRAM STORIES

Individuals, influencers, and businesses alike use Instagram stories every single day. Some brands have even built their entire Instagram brand strategy around them.

Make it your goal to use Instagram Stories in 2020. How do you start? First and foremost, stories should be fun. They should be “in the moment” and easy for your business. Easier said than done, we get it.

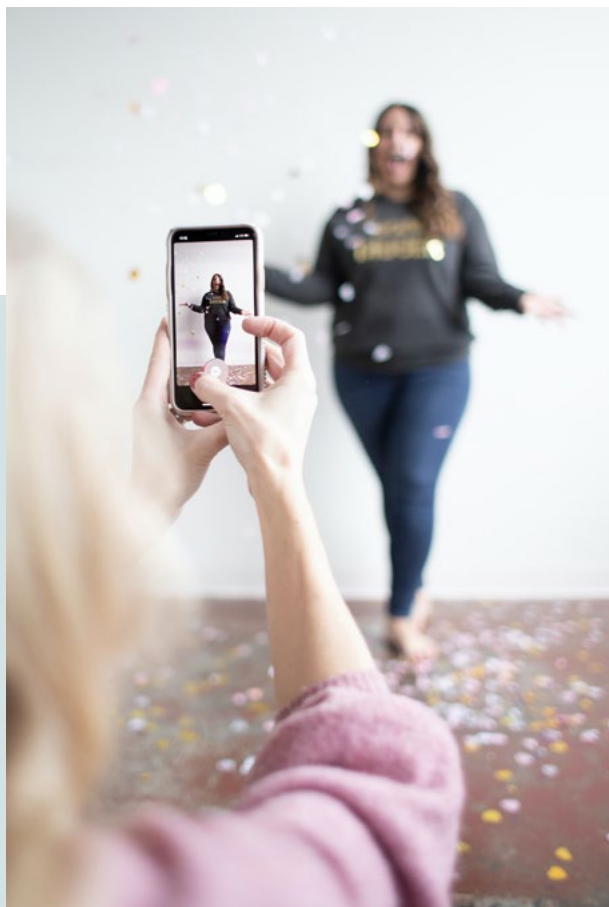
Instagram stories create an authentic and direct connection with your followers. Stories give followers an accurate behind the scenes view of your team, your products or services, your company culture, and anything else you’d like to share.

So, what should you post on Instagram Stories?

- Tips on how to use your product
- Client success stories
- Sneak peaks of “coming soon” products or services
- Company culture, or behind the scenes videos of your office
- Takeovers (i.e. let a client or employee show a “day in the life”)
- Ask questions or generate polls
- Tell a story using multiple graphics, photos or videos
- “Swipe up” links for users can shop your products or read your blog posts

**Most importantly,
be authentic.
Be creative.
Be fun and
engaging.**

This will earn
you views and
engagement and
help you grow your
following.





HAPPY INSTAGRAMMING!

Instagram is an amazing tool to use for growing your business, connecting with your audience on a new level, and driving sales and revenue. **It's not going to happen in one day, but if you invest your time and resources in Instagram, you will see it pay off.**

The algorithm is changing regularly and there are always new trends, features and improvements to keep in mind. Stay in the loop by visiting our [blog](#) for updates.

Still have questions about using Instagram to grow your business?

[Contact us](#) anytime for a FREE 30 minute strategy evaluation. We are always happy to help you understand how to pivot your Instagram strategy to benefit your business!



THE MARKEY GROUP
marketing | design | promotions | print

themarkeygroup.com