



Instagram Marketing for Beginners

— A TUTORIAL



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Instagram has grown tremendously since its launch. In fact, it has now reached over 1 billion users and seems set to challenge even Facebook, the world's largest social media platform.

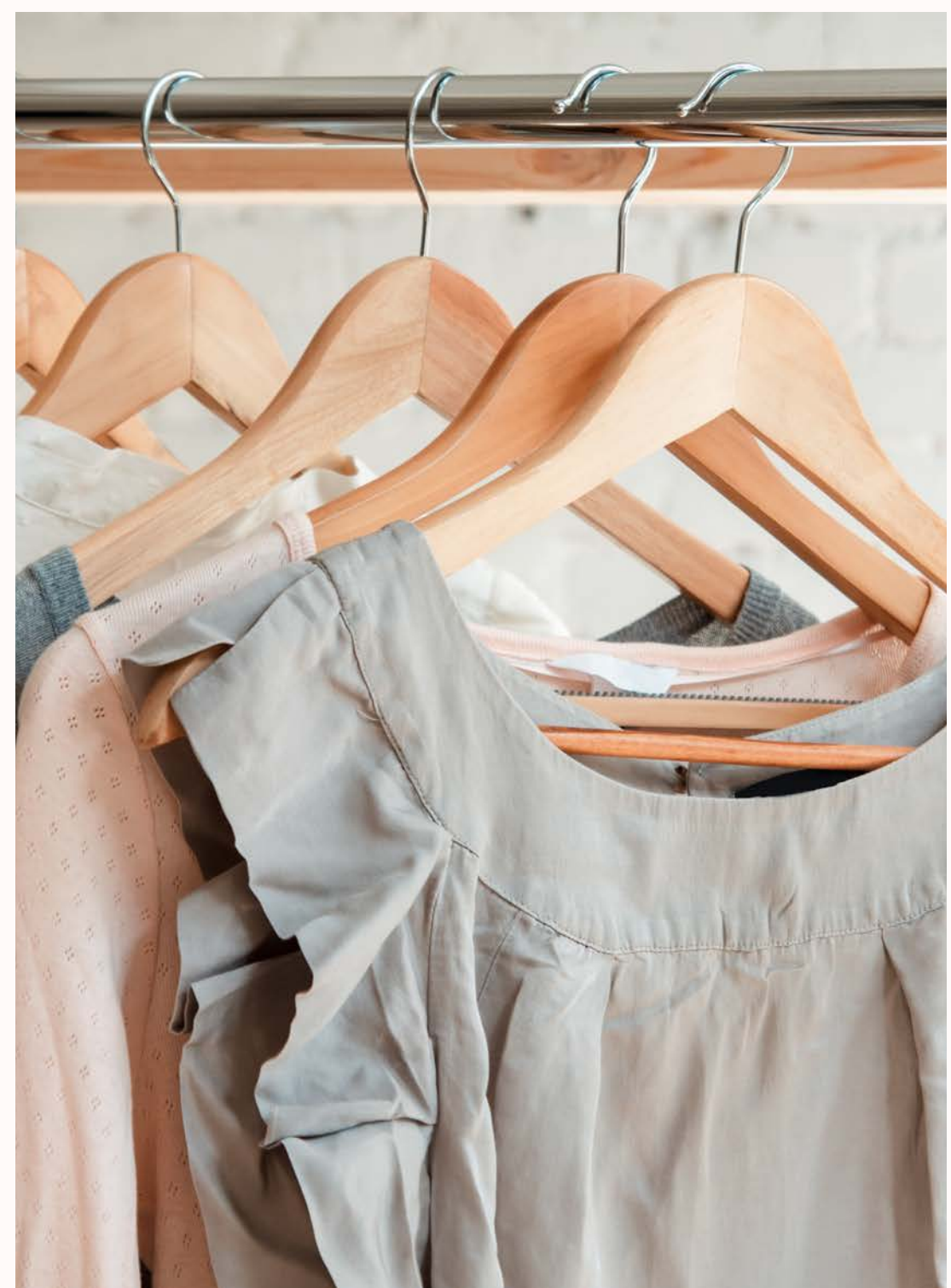
With numbers like these, it is only fair to view Instagram as a great place to market your business.

It can however seem confusing when looking to market your business on Instagram for the first time. Where do you even start? Luckily you've found the right post to guide you through the ups and downs of Instagram marketing. Here you will learn the following:

What is Instagram Marketing?

- How to build your Instagram business profile
- How to gather and grow your following
- Using Instagram insights to track your performance
- I don't know about you but I'm excited to begin!

Let's go!



Defining Instagram Marketing

Think of Instagram marketing as a type of social media marketing where you will use the Instagram platform to find leads and customers for your business.

Note that you can use Instagram marketing and promote your business in two main ways:

- Using paid methods such as influencer marketing and advertising
- Using unpaid methods e.g. through blog posts, comments, and Instagram stories. This is generally known as making organic content.

The goal of being on Instagram for you will often be selling services and products, creating good relationships with future customers, and gaining a following.

Later on, we will find out exactly how you can do this.

But first...

The Instagram algorithm

If you have had an interest in digital marketing then you may have likely come across the term algorithm. Note that you don't have to have an in-depth understanding of how it works. However, if you want to be one step ahead in your Instagram marketing then it is a good idea to have a basic understanding of how it works.



The goal of the Instagram algorithm is to provide relevant helpful and useful content to users. This is what makes it such a good ally to use in your marketing.

The algorithm will suggest content to users based on their previous behavior. With this in mind, your aim should be to provide users with quality content that is useful and actionable.

Never create content for the sake of it and always make sure it adds value to users. Some content you may want to consider include:

1. Organic Content

Organic content refers to videos, blog posts, and stories that are unpaid. The goal of creating such content is to keep the audience engaged, entertained, and interested.

2. Instagram ads

For a more direct marketing approach aimed at making sales quickly, you will want to consider Instagram ads. These can include shoppable ads, video ads, image ads, carousel ads, and story ads.

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The **Image and Video Ads** feature an image and video respectively. They appear in the user's feeds and often have a call to action such as shop now, learn now, book now, watch more, listen now.

Carousel Ads, as shown below have more than a single image or video each of which can have a link. let's assume you have an online store, you can show a few items on sale on the carousel ad with a link that takes the user to your store. Carousel ads will also appear in the user feeds.

Story Ads are considered one of the top and best ways to market on Instagram. Here you will create immersive ads that allow you to play with your creativity. As the name suggests, story ads will show up between Instagram stories. They will come with a call to action button and sponsored tag at the top right.

Note that story ads need to grab attention instantly. This allows you to hook users who are perusing through Instagram fast.

Shoppable Posts allow Instagram users to buy items without having to leave Instagram. You can tag products on your Instagram account and when users click on it, they are taken directly to the shopping page of your website.

3. Influencer marketing

The third main way to advertise your business on Instagram is via influencer marketing. It is highly popular.

Influencers have already gathered a following based on their content and niche. They exist in every niche from tech to finance to fashion.

Influencers can help give your brand a huge boost in recognition. Note that it is critical that you find the right influencers. Now that you are aware of the different ways that you can market your business on Instagram, let's get to the meat of it, shall we?

First, we learn what to do and not do when setting up your Instagram account profile.

1. How to set up your Instagram business profile
2. It is easy to think that you can just set up a personal Instagram profile and start marketing. However to be credible to your audience and to enjoy extra features such as Instagram insights, you will need an Instagram business profile.
3. And this is how to create one!

Start by **creating an Instagram account**. It is ideal to use your business or company name to allow for brand recognition.

A **company Facebook business page**. This is a requirement of Instagram for verification purposes.

To create your Instagram business account, log into your Instagram account. Go to the bottom right corner and tap the circular icon. Click on settings.

Once you are on the settings page, scroll until you find the "Switch to Business Profile".

Finally, you will be prompted to connect the Instagram account to the Facebook business page. You will then need to edit the business's info such as contact number, email, and location. Ensure that you do not add private information as it will be public on your Instagram profile.



How to create a top-notch business profile

Firstly, remain consistent. This means including the colors that you have on your website as well as the fonts and images. This makes your business more recognizable.

There are two main elements of your Instagram business profile that you need to focus on. These are your photo and the bio.

For the photo, it is always a good idea to use your business or company logo. This makes it much easier for users to recognize the brand.

Now to the bio. Firstly, always make the bio about your customers and for the business. Instead of stating what the business offers, I say what the customers stand to gain.

If you have anything on offer, you can use your bio to promote it. Again remember to make it about what customers stand to benefit from. For instance, you can promote an online course on starting an online business.

You can also use your bio to encourage users to engage with your business and brand. For instance, you can ask them to share ideas for a chance to be featured on your website.



The bio is also where you add a link allowing customers to explore your brand. It can be a link to a company website or content or a sale.

Finally, it's a good idea to add emojis in your bio. They are an excellent and quick way to drive a point.

Note that you have just 150 characters to play with so make use of them wisely!



Instagram features for Business that you should use

Instagram offers a variety of marketing features and tools that you can use to enhance engagement with users. Let's take a look at a few of these that you should consider.

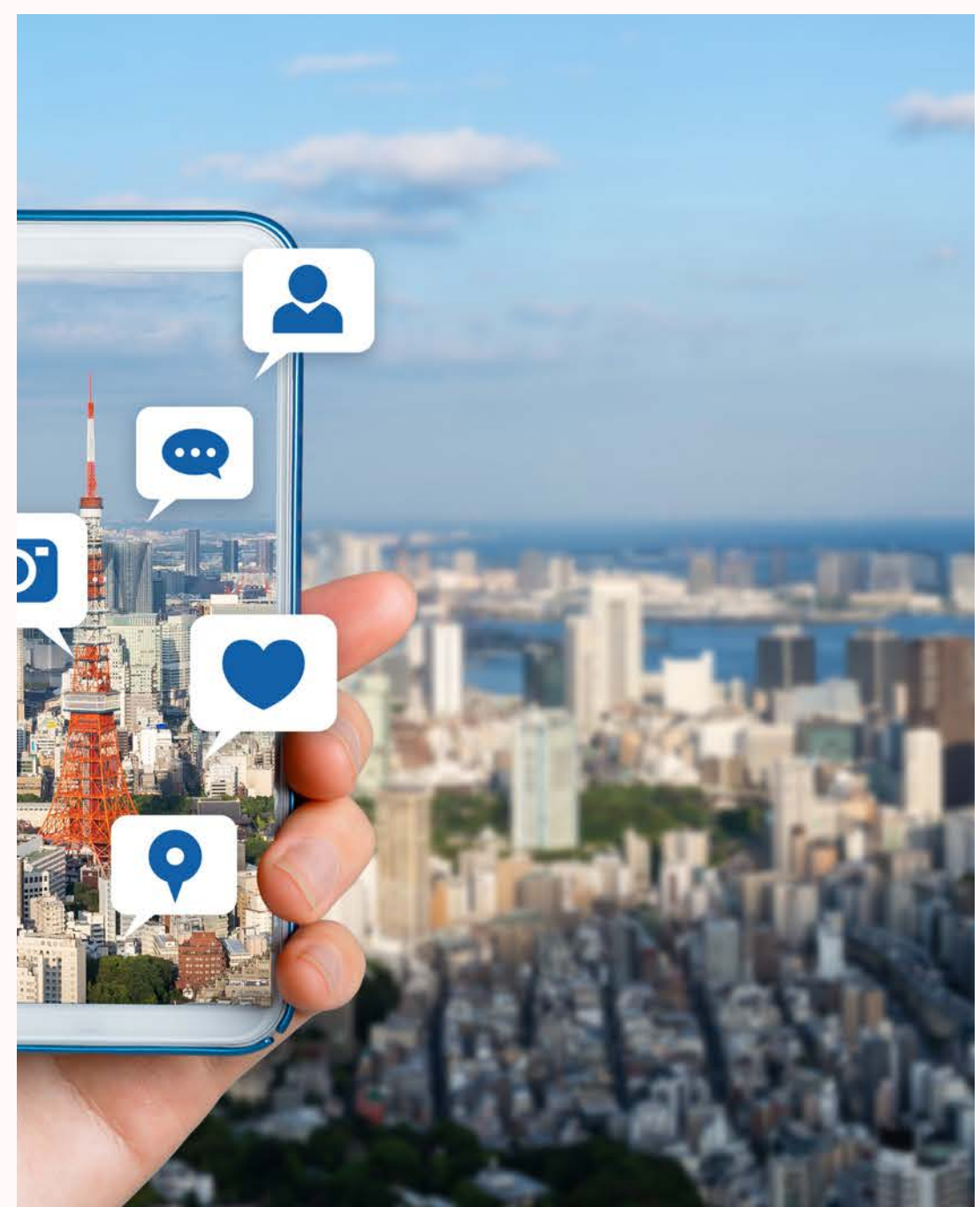
1. Instagram Hashtags

This is nothing new and hashtags have been around for a long time. In fact, they seem to be used everywhere on the internet nowadays. The main advantage of using hashtags is that you can quickly communicate to users that you have what they are searching for.

A lot of online users will search for content and even products based on hashtags alone. This is why it's such a powerful marketing tool. If you have content that you are looking to promote, add the associated hashtags to make it easier to find by online users.

2. Instagram stories

Over half of Instagram users make use of Instagram stories. The popularity of this tool makes complete sense. Stories are an interesting and engaging way to connect with your followers. Instagram stories last for just 24 hours and are only 15 seconds long.



They offer businesses an opportunity to relay information that is more in-depth or more timely. There are several ways to utilize Instagram stories such as;

- Show behind the scenes content
- Answer common and popular questions
- Promoting a contest or giveaway
- Letting an influencer or an employee post content for a day
- Promoting content such as an online course or an eBook

3. Instagram Live

This tool or feature lets you broadcast live for live interaction with your followers. It is a good feature to utilize when looking to promote something or relay timely information.

With Instagram live, you show up first in your followers feeds. When they open the app they will also get the notification that it is happening. One thing to take note of with Instagram live is that you should only use this feature when you have great content to promote otherwise you run the risk of losing followers if you waste their time.

How to create a successful marketing strategy on Instagram

There are several factors that combine to result in a successful Instagram marketing strategy. First off, you will need to make a clear goal. You will also need to come up with strategies designed to help you achieve that goal. Finally, you need to evaluate those strategies to see the progress and make changes and tweaks where necessary.

1. Identifying your goals

Your business goals are going to determine the type of marketing strategy you chose. To determine your goals, the old business acronym SMART comes in handy.

Specific – you should determine exactly what and how you want to achieve it. Have numbers and figures.

Measurable – The goals themselves must be measurable. You should be able to track them as you progress.

Attainable – it is good to be realistic. You will likely not get to a million followers in a month.

Relevant – the goals should be in line with your industry and business

Time-bound – create a schedule and timeframe in which you intend to achieve your goals.

Now that you have set your goals, it is now time to create your Instagram content strategy.



2. How to create your Instagram content Strategy

We noted earlier the various posting options that you can use with Instagram. The one you choose will depend mostly on your audience.

You need therefore to understand who your audience is, what motivates them, how do they like being entertained and how they relate with different brands.

Note that you will likely not have all the answers to the above questions instantly. You will have them as you continue to understand your audience better.

The more you understand the audience, the better you will be able to create successful Instagram marketing strategies.

A few points to keep in mind when creating an Instagram marketing content strategy include:

Ensure the content is in line with your business brand. For instance, if you sell men's watches, ensure the images and content give off a sophisticated and elegant vibe.

If your products and business are based on kid's clothing, play with different fun colors.

- Snoop on your competitors

It is always a good idea to find out what other online businesses in your niche are doing. This can help provide you with valuable insight, ideas, and little-known tricks to get you ahead of the game.

- Create a content calendar

An Instagram content calendar can help you remain on track with your Instagram content strategy. You will be able to keep your content coherent and cohesive.

With a content calendar, you can write down all the posts that you need to upload within the next month.

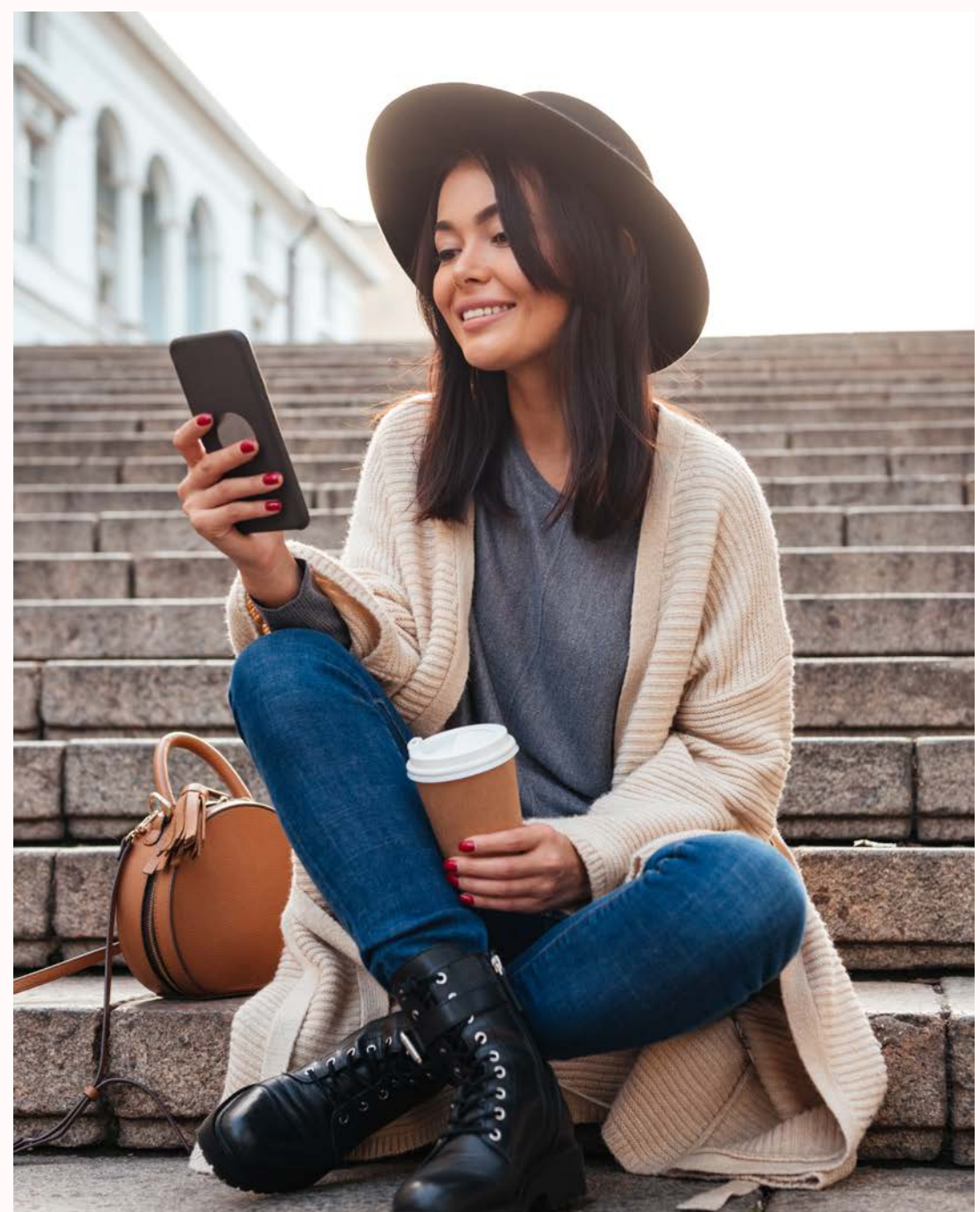
- Make use of Instagram insights

There is no leaving this one out. In fact, it would be hard to come up with a successful content strategy without Instagram insights. It offers you metrics on how customers are engaging with the brand.

You can also access demographic information on your followers. This helps you identify a target audience that you can then later market to.

How to grow your following on Instagram

Perhaps one of the major questions that anyone who is starting out on Instagram has is "how do I get more followers?"



The great thing is that there are tips and tricks that you can use to grow your following on Instagram.

1. Hosting a giveaway

You can partner with another business and host a giveaway or contest. The idea behind this strategy is that since both of you have a similar niche and audience you will both benefit from the following.

During the giveaway, request that those joining should follow or tag.

2. Give shoutouts

Shoutouts are similar to reposting. Here you will ask other businesses if they would repost your content and in return, you would repost theirs. Just make sure that you seek out partnerships that are willing to offer mutual value.

3. Repost other business content

An easy and smart way to gain a following is to tag the content of other successful businesses that are in your niche. Chances are the followers of such businesses will notice and become followers of you.

Also, there is a chance that the business may notice and tag you also giving you more exposure. Sometimes, the businesses will also follow you.

While you can repost manually, it is much more efficient to use apps such as Repost for Instagram.

4. Creating great captions

The majority of Instagram users will scroll through the feeds when looking for entertainment or just as part of their daily routine.

It is possible for you to capture such users and turn them into followers by creating great and moving Instagram captions.

Note that the aim is to convey the feeling behind your image or your video.

If the image or video is a product that you are selling, explain why people should care about the product. The caption should spark interest and explain why people should engage with the product.

5. Reach out to an influencer

Here the goal is to reach out to a popular influencer in your niche or industry. The great thing about the strategy is that your brand is exposed to the influencer's followers.

A great way to find the right influencers for your business is to join influencer marketing platforms. These platforms make it much easier to find and vet influencers. Subsequently, this makes it much easier to develop relationships with the influencers.



The Best Instagram apps for marketing

When you are just starting out, you can make use of Instagram features to market your business. However, if you want to take your marketing to the next level, you may want to consider Instagram apps.

While there are plenty of apps to consider, the best ones to use will make your posts memorable and sharable. The apps will help you grab the attention of your audience much more efficiently.

Let's take a look at the most important and essential marketing apps that Instagram businesses should have.

VSCO

This is a photo editing app that is a must-have. It is available for both iOS and Android. One of the major features that sets VSCO apart from other photo editing apps is its video editing and movie-like filters. Some of the functions that you can utilize include enhancing skin color, setting contrast, and even darkening edges.

Later

This one is a scheduling app that is also available on iOS and android. Its main function is to help you schedule the best time to post. Simply access your phone's media content and select an item. Upload the item into Later's dashboard. When the scheduler pops up, add captions, tags, these will help the content become more discoverable.

Hootsuite

This is also another app that can help you schedule when to post content. It provides you the option of scheduling manually saving the content as draft or put it in a queue. You can also use Hootsuite to find out about various marketing metrics such as follower growth and performance.

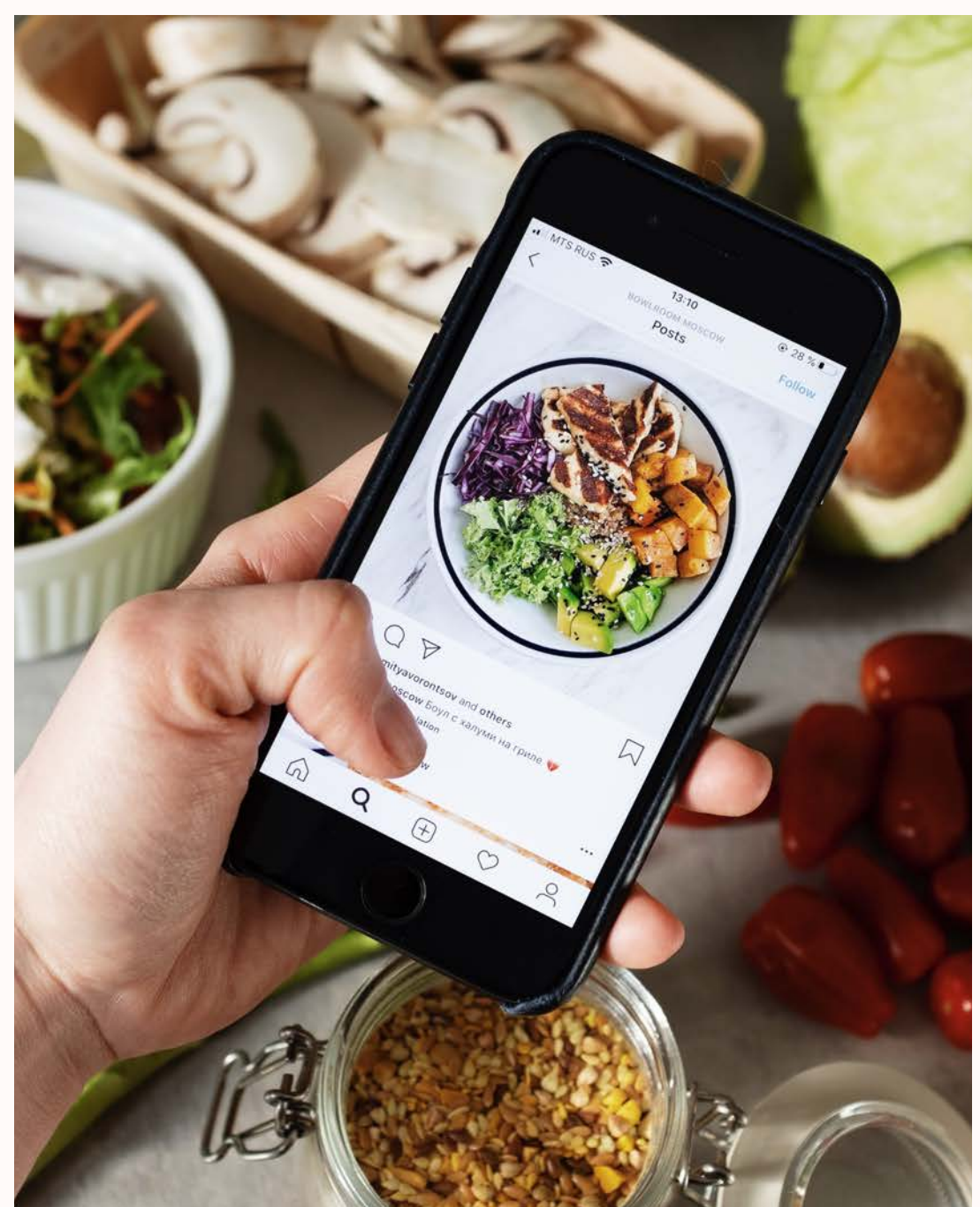
StoryLuxe

This is among the most popular Instagram story apps available and with good reason. It offers users a multitude of options to play with such as changing stylish features, templates and even colors for your stories. Many of these options offer cinematic quality.

Layout

Layout is yet another popular Instagram story app. It offers an image mixer that is super smooth. You can make a collage with up to nine images.

You can either capture photos with the inbuilt image booth or use the content and images in your phone.





How to make money with Instagram marketing

Once you have gained a decent number of followers, you should be able to make money on Instagram. Now that you've learned how to do Instagram marketing, there are several options that you can consider

- Selling your own products
- Being an influencer
- Joining an affiliate program



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