



Instagram Growth Guide

In this lesson, you will learn about several different techniques for how to grow your account including

- ★ Find Your Brand Voice and Create Unique Content
- ★ Why Consistency is Important
- ★ Optimise Your Bio
- ★ The dos and don'ts of the Follow/Unfollow Method + the % Rule
- ★ How to use the 'Related Accounts Suggestion'.
- ★ Why Content Creation Grows a Following Through Captions, Video, Stories and Selfies!
- ★ Experiment With Different Content Types
- ★ How to engage with Complementary Businesses and Brands
- ★ Partnerships and Cross Promotion
- ★ Hashtags
- ★ Competitions and Giveaways.
- ★ Challenges
- ★ Paid Advertising

Find your brand voice and create unique content

- ★ People follow brands because they connect with the personality which shines through the content you create. However, what works for one brand might not work for another.
- ★ You need to decide how you want people to feel when they interact with your brand. Do you want to feel like a big sister, or an authoritative figure? Do you want your brand to be playful, fun, serious.... the list goes on!
- ★ What topics do you want to talk about within your content? All your content should showcase your brand's personality and ideals.
- ★ Create a brand personality for your business and show this on Instagram. Creating brand guidelines helps you stay consistent. These guidelines should include notes on style, tone, values plus your brand's colours and fonts.



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Why Consistency is Important

- ★ There's no denying the importance of consistency on Instagram.
- ★ By posting regularly, you're essentially letting your followers know what to expect from you — whether it's daily Instagram Stories, a bi-weekly Reel, or a few feed posts a week.
- ★ Posting more consistently can also help with your Instagram engagement. When your followers expect you to post, they're more likely to interact and engage with your content.
- ★ That being said, keeping a consistent posting schedule isn't always easy. When you're juggling content creation, alongside other business duties, it can be time-consuming to manually post every single day.
- ★ For a quick solution, you could use a scheduling tool, like Later.
- ★ By planning and scheduling your Instagram posts in advance, you can get content out even when you're super busy. It's a massive time-saver!
- ★ TIP: Experiment with a posting frequency and see how your community responds. If you see an increase of followers and engagement from posting daily (or every other day) — do that!

Optimise Your Bio

- ★ Please refer to Essentials 2, but it bears repeating here. Without an optimised bio you will lose potential followers. People will click over to check you out when they are deciding whether or not to follow you, and if the bio is lacking they will move on.
- ★ So it's crucial that you make the most of the 150 characters you have to tell potential followers who you are, what you do, and what they'll get out of following you.
- ★ Your Instagram bio should include:
 - A clear description of what you do
 - Touches of your personality
 - A call to action - read more, shop, contact us, etc.
 - A link - Your in-bio link is your only clickable link on Instagram, so use it wisely. Some businesses include a standard link to their website, while others change it regularly to reflect recent posts. You could even use an app like LinkTree to display a single page with multiple links on it.



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Follow/Unfollow Method DOs

- ★ The Follow/Unfollow Method is a good way to grow your following (in the early days) on Instagram and can help you quickly get up to 500 or 1000 followers.
- ★ On a basic level, it means that you follow people and then if they like the look of you, they will follow you back (this is why a good username and bio are important!)
- ★ The best way to do this is to follow engaged followers of other accounts (those who like and comment)
- ★ Follow accounts who you have identified would be interested in your account, who fit your avatar and who may be interested in the products or services you provide.
- ★ Please do not use this method in isolation, use it as part of a combination of strategies to grow your following/community

Follow/Unfollow Method DON'Ts

- ★ We would NOT recommend a blanket following someone else's followers
- ★ We recommend you do the unfollow method manually and NOT with a bot or 3rd party app as Instagram is cracking down on these methods. See the Instagram TVL for how to do this
- ★ Once you hit your first 500 or 1000 followers DON'T rely on this method, it is best to start putting in place the other methods we recommend

Follow/Unfollow Percentage Rule

- ★ Only a small percentage of people you follow will follow you back
- ★ Example: if you follow 100 people and get 10 followers, your follow/unfollow % is 10%
- ★ Whether you like it or not, when people decide to follow you they will look at the number of followers you have (and your content). In general, you want more followers than you are following. A good ratio is 3/2 or 2/1
- ★ Example: 3/2 = 300 followers, 200 following and 2/1 = 200 followers, 100 following

WARNING: If you are too aggressive in the follow/unfollow method, you will get flagged by Instagram and potentially a temporary block put on your account. We recommend following no more than 80-100 per day and then every 3-5 days clearing out the people who don't follow you back (but again, only unfollow 80-100 so you don't get flagged). Do your following/unfollowing at the start and end of the day so you break it up.

This method is controversial but we teach it because most people don't admit to doing it (even though they usually started their accounts out this way!) and we recommend it because we believe that getting to the first 500 or 1000 followers is a game changer for a lot of businesses and this is one of the fastest methods to use to get there.



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We would not recommend using an unfollower app to do your unfollowing because this may flag up your account. You could however, use an unfollower app to help you to quickly see who isn't following you back and then manually find and unfollow them directly in the Instagram app.

Use the Related Accounts Suggestions on Instagram

- ★ Instagram offers a "Suggested For You" you just need to click the downward arrow to access the suggested accounts
- ★ Do make sure you check the accounts first and see if you do wish to follow and they are the right fit

Content Creation: Captions

- ★ Ensure you create content that resonates with your audience and enables them to get to know, like and trust you. They are more likely to follow you if they like what they see and read!
- ★ Create content that inspires, educates and entertains aka Edutainment!
- ★ Ensure you use keywords in your captions. A lot of keywords within posts are now searchable, which means any and all posts talking about the key phrase/words should show up even if the actual hashtag is not included. (Introduced November 2020)
- ★ Longer captions work well. Instagram used to be all about visuals, but now the focus is on creating copy that is authentic, which allows your audience to learn about you, your brand and your mission. So test what works with your audience and then go for it and be consistent
- ★ Formula for creating engaging captions: headline, setup, share, bridge, and CTA.
 - For the headline, use something thought-provoking or exciting. Think about what's going to capture their attention immediately? Instagram only shows the first 1-2 lines of your caption in the feed, so make it count
 - For the setup, you'll want to hook them further by giving them a little more information. What's the context they need to know?
 - Next, you're going to share what you really want to say to your followers, whether it's answering FAQs, sharing a story or a how-to tip. This is the "value" part of your caption, so feel free to use as much space as you need
 - Then, use one or two bridge sentences to reiterate why your followers should care and what's in it for them
 - Before finishing with a strong CTA. This can be as simple as leaving a comment on the post or clicking the link in your bio



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Content Creation: Video

- ★ The use of Video is key, on the feed, but also through IGTV. Videos work because they capture your audience's attention. Subtitles on videos are also important for accessibility and to meet people's different learning style and viewing habits.
- ★ So creating an IGTV series is a great idea because it gives you more visibility on Instagram, you can be found in the search section, and through hashtags. Please revisit the Posting Properly Lesson for more information.

Content Creation: Reels

- ★ Instagram Reels are a fun and creative way to get new followers on Instagram
- ★ Why? They have incredible reach (you can get thousands of views) and if your account is public, they're discoverable via the Reels tab
- ★ Reels are shown to everyone, not just your followers
- ★ There are plenty of ways to use Instagram Reels for your business — we've seen tips and tricks, how-to videos, behind-the-scenes content, and more. And as Instagram recently announced that it's no longer just "a photo-sharing app", it's a good idea to start incorporating more video content in your strategy.

Content Creation: Stories and Selfies!

- ★ Make sure you use Stories. They are great for engagement and growing your following and in many cases get seen as much or more than grid posts
- ★ Selfies (images and videos) work really well on Instagram. They help people connect with you. People like to get to know, like and trust the person running the account/business and Selfies are a fantastic way to achieve this.

Experiment With Different Content Types

- ★ The key to growth is to experiment with all of the above types of content. Mixing up the content types is a great way to gain more followers because it gives you the opportunity to reach and connect with a wide range of people.
- ★ The algorithm looks at interests and aims to show people the content types that they interact with most frequently. Therefore, if one user engages more often with Reels, they're more likely to see Reels in their feed. If another interacts more frequently with carousel posts, they'll see more of those in their feed.



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Engage with Complementary Businesses and Brands

- ★ If you work locally, you could look for local businesses or if you work online, look for businesses that complement what you do and your values
- ★ Follow them, engage with them, help them to get to know you and make the effort to get to know them
- ★ They are more likely to champion you, want to work with you if you have made an effort with them and they know, trust and like you

Partnerships & Cross Promotion

- ★ Look to set up a partnership with other businesses and micro influencers*
- ★ Mention them in your posts and in your Stories, there is a good likelihood they will share your content and this means greater visibility
- ★ Suggest doing joint Instagram Lives with them. You will be seen by their audience who if they like what they see and hear will come and follow you
- ★ Write a guest blog for these businesses and allow it to be featured on their website, mentioned on their Instagram page
- ★ Remember to optimise your Profile and Highlights so that potential followers, partnership businesses can see exactly who you are and what you do. If it matches with their values and mission they will follow you

*A micro influencer is someone who, in a particular niche, carries a lot of weight with their recommendations, even though they typically have less than 10k followers. If you aren't a big enough brand to garner the attention of an influencer, local businesses and micro influencers can be the way to go.

Hashtags

- ★ You can use up to 30 in your posts (including IGTV and Reels) and 10 on your Stories and this is a great way for more eyes to see your content, they do need to be researched first though!
- ★ You can follow hashtags and this is great for finding new people to follow who complement your business and brand. Do start up a conversation with people you follow (commented and like their posts and Stories). This will encourage them to follow you and get to know you
- ★ You can engage with people on the hashtags you are following. Creating meaningful comments and conversations is a great way to get people to take note of you and then come and follow you



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Competitions or Giveaways

- ★ These are a great way for you to raise awareness of your brand
- ★ You can do this with another account or several who have accounts with a larger audience than your own. Their followers will get to know about you and will have to follow you through your giveaway rules. Great for growing your following
- ★ There are lots of different methods you can use. They are outlined in the external link below. <https://neilpatel.com/blog/best-instagram-contest-ideas/>

Instagram Challenges

- ★ You can find different types of Instagram Challenges to get involved with and this is a great way to find new people to engage with and find new people to follow and be followed by
- ★ Type in #Instagramchallenge and it will come up with various challenges. We also recommend following @hellosocial.media who outlines monthly challenges in her Highlights

Paid Advertising

- ★ Paid Advertising can also lead to an increase in followers
- ★ To find out more about Paid Advertising check out the Paid Advertising Workshop in the Strategy Module

Promote Your Instagram Account on Your Website or Newsletter

- ★ Promoting your account on your website is another great way to get Instagram followers — and it's also easy to do.
- ★ From plugins to code embeds, there are dozens of options when it comes to responsively embedding your Instagram feed on your website so it looks great on any device.
- ★ Many website builders even offer templates that come with customisable options for embedding your feed.
- ★ Similarly, if you have an engaged newsletter audience, you can encourage them to follow you on Instagram too for another way to connect

SEO on Instagram

- ★ Remember you can optimise your Profile for Search. Name and Username are incredibly powerful and can help people find your business, using keywords in your Bio is also very important.
- ★ These sections of your Instagram are incredibly powerful for SEO purposes. Remember to treat hashtags like keywords and use keywords in captions (these are both searchable). Being tagged is a great way to increase discoverability tags and mentions on Instagram are a lot like backlinks on the web.



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Key Takeaways

- ★ Remember, you want engaged followers! You can do this by following 'engaged' followers of other similar accounts (rather than just following the followers of similar accounts as suggested). Find and follow people who comment (rather than just like)
- ★ Only use the Follow/Unfollow method to get those first 500 to 1000 followers, after that deploy the other methods
- ★ Make sure you are consistent with the methods you use and that you are visible on Instagram
- ★ The Algorithm will reward you for consistency, engagement, content that gets good engagement and being a valued part of the Instagram Community
- ★ If you look after the Algorithm and your followers, your content will be seen by more people.