

THE 4 STEPS TO
INSTAGRAM
GROW YOUR FOLLOWING



INTRODUCTION

Instagram is one of the fastest growing social media. As a brand or business, it is a key part of getting visibility, engaging with current and prospective customers and growing and sustaining your business. When used correctly, Instagram can help you drive HUGE amounts of traffic to your business and increase your sales dramatically.

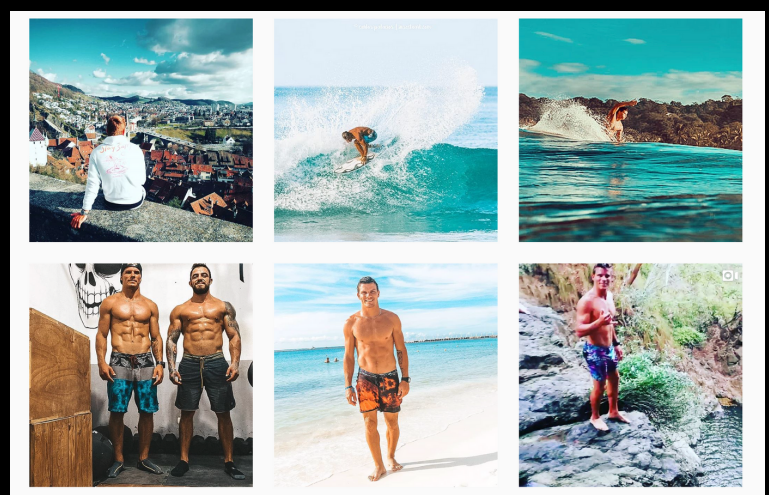
These days, before someone even gets to your website they will check out your Instagram feed. If they like what they see, they will keep scrolling. If they are still intrigued, they will start reading your captions and then if still interested they will go to your website or landing page and hopefully buy your product.

Instagram is the new first impression of your business. It is all about the look, feel and ethos of your brand. From just a few photos, a person will decide if he's into your or not. Kind of like online dating your brand. So show your best self, and play the game right in order to find your dream match!

STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR BRAND

Before you even post, you have to know what kind of posts to put out there. Who are you? What is your brand? What do you do? Ask yourself these questions. Do not post content for the sake of posting. Everything you post should be congruent with your brand and the image you want to present to the world as a business or brand.

Choose 3-4 kinds of posts you will always do that are consistent with your brand. If you're a surfer for example, you can rotate between sweet shots of you surfing, hot photos of your hot surf bod and the cool spots you get to travel to because of your competitions. If your brand is the best cat bed ever, you can post cute photos of cats relaxing on that bed (cuteness), the bed matching beautiful homes (lifestyle shots), and funny cat memes (humour).



STEP 2: YOUR GRID & PHOTOS & VIDEO

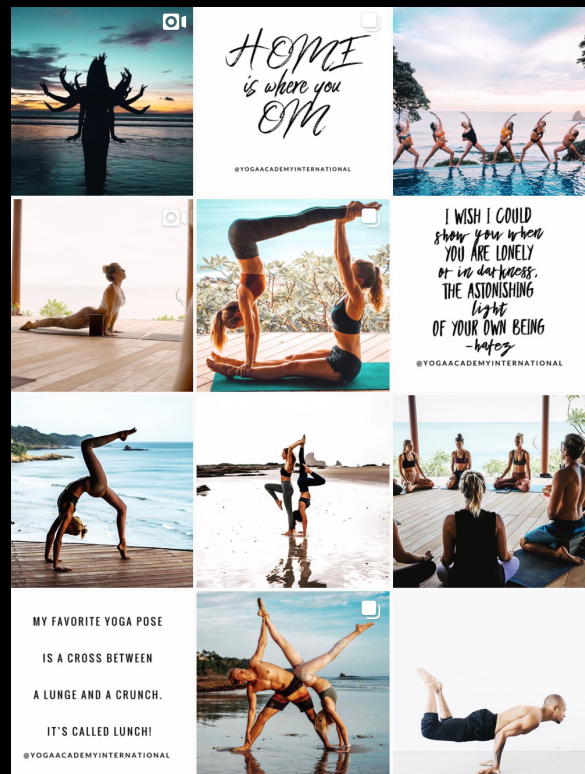
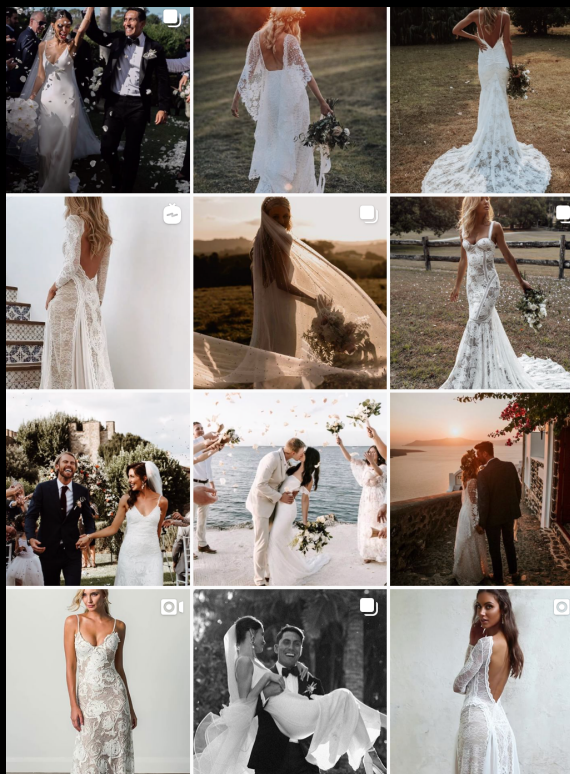
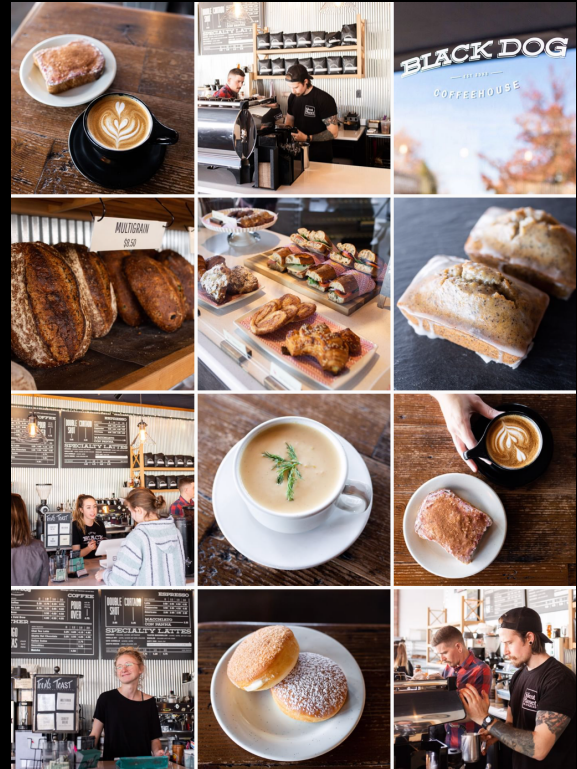
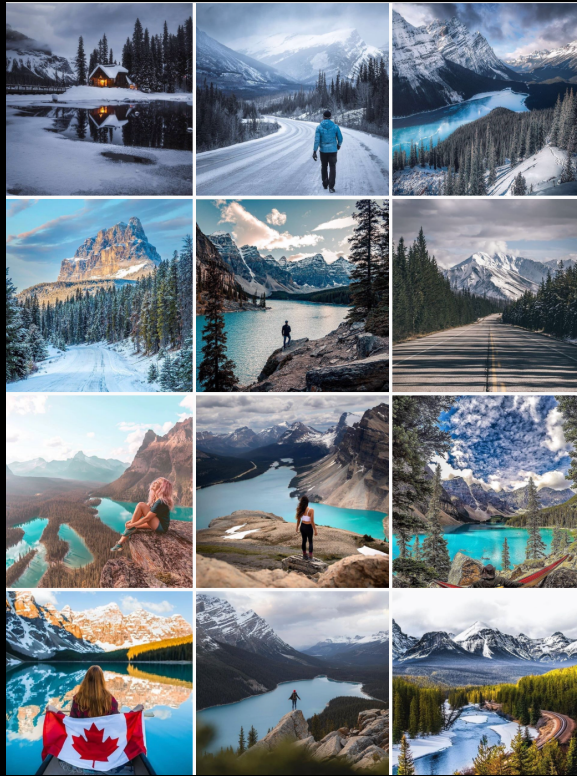
A person will choose to follow you or not based on your grid. What is your grid? It's the 12 latest photos on your feed. They communicate the look and feel of your brand in an instant.

When your photo pops up on someone's feed, or you tell someone to follow you on Instagram, the first thing they will do is check out your grid. It is the grid that needs to draw in your potential customer, so it's gotta look good!

Your grid should VERY CLEARLY communicate who you are. It should also be aesthetically pleasing and have a color scheme that fits the feel of your brand. You want your grid to be consistent in message and color story in order for your future clients to get to know you and your brand.

Even if you're posting a reel or IGTV or video, have a cover photo for it that matches your grid! For Reels and IGTV you can add a separate photo as the cover. For Instagram videos it will be a frame from your video. Choose wisely

The best grids showcase clear, minimalistic photos that easily express the brand. Here are some examples of beautiful grids: Can you guess what kind of brand they are?



PHOTOS...

The best photos on Instagram are clean and clear. You do not have to be a professional photographer or have a fancy camera to make your photos look great! Just make sure that your subject clearly stands out of the background, that your photos are IN FOCUS and that all lines are straight. (So if you're photographing the ocean, make sure the horizon line is straight). Be sure that there are no weird shadows or light blotches on your subject. This is distracting. The best times of the day to shoot photos are within 1 hour before and after sunrise and sunset.

I've also included 4 lightroom mobile preset packs for you so that you can EASILY edit your photos in just 1 click! Once you apply the preset to your photo, tweak it a little adjusting the contrast, exposure and shadows to get it just how you like it. Always use the same 1-3 filters in EVERY photo so your grid stays consistent. I also recommend after editing, placing a second filter at about 10-20% over ALL your photos, the same filter all the time so keep your grid looking extra snazzy! You can do this with apps like VSCO cam or even just use the built in filters on your phone.

CAPTIONING YOUR CONTENT

So what should you write as a caption to your photo? It's not enough to just say what the photos is of. That should be obvious. It will not move your audience to post a photo of the Eiffel tower with the caption *Le Tour Eiffel*. But it might move them to post that same photo and write, *This is where I first spotted my soulmate. I accidentally tripped over her when trying to capture a photo of the Eiffel Tower. Now we've been married for 20 years!*

Be as personal and/or colloquial with your audience as possible You are not a robot. People love STORIES. They want to be inspired. They want behinds the scenes knowledge.

The key to Instagram is- LEARN LUST LAUGH. Each post should these elements, separately or together. Teach your audience something about your brand. Have them lust after your awesome product, lifestyle or experience. Invite them to laugh at the story or joke you are telling.

REELS

Reels are instagram's latest short-form video.

Reels are the BEST WAY to get seen on instagram right now. Whenever instagraam comes out with a new feature, USE IT.

The algorithm will favour accounts that use it's latest feature. This means you are more likely to show up on the explore page and in the feeds of your followers.

Reels are 15 - 30 second videos. They are fun, quirky and punchy. Your reels DO NOT have to be professional quality, just in good lighting. Reels that do best are funny or informative and have quick jolts of text with catchy music.

If you need ideas for reels or want to know how to make them, check out youtube. It's the quickest and best way to learn how to make IG reels.

Shoot your reels wherever and then add a cover that looks great on your grid! (IG hack)

STEP 3: GETTING SEEN

Okay so now that you know how to take awesome photos, and what captions to put with them... how do you actually get seen? The answer is interactions and hashtags.

You can use up to 30 hashtags per photo but currently, Instagram will only pick up any random 7 of those. Choose your hashtags wisely. Instagram also wants you to use different hashtags all the time. If you repeat the same ones over and over your hashtags will stop being picked up. Make sure your hashtags are relevant to your photo and brand.

When you use hashtags, use a combination of big, medium and small. This is your best chance for getting seen in any hashtag group. Hashtags can be put in your caption OR in your comments. It doesn't matter, so to keep your captions pretty, place hashtags in comments.

Small hashtags have 15K or less photos associated with them. Medium Have 15K - 90K. Big have 100K - 500K SUPER BIG have 1 Million+.

FLICK is a paid app but an amazing way to find relevant hashtags AND to see which of your hashtags are getting picked up. There are plenty of free hashtag apps too.

STEP 4: INTERACT

The other way to get seen is by interacting! Instagram wants you to be part of their community. They want you on the platform and they want your content to keep others on the platform.

The more engaging your content is, the more Instagram will pump you up! So each time you post, spend about 20-30 minutes interacting with your followers and with potential followers. Don't just post and walk away, respond to comments. Comment on other people's photos.

Find a brand similar to your and interact with the followers of that brand because they might start following you too! It is important that your interactions are MEANINGFUL. It is not enough to just comment with an emoji. Write something that shows you've noticed the image or words, show that you are interested in the content you are engaging with. This will create interest in your content too.

STORIES

Stories are an AMAZING way to interact with your followers, get them to know you and your brand and get more eyes on your IG account. Stories last 24hours but you can add whichever ones you want to your highlights.

Stories that help you get seen more are ones that allow your followers to interact with you- so questions, polls, playing this or that.

You can use stories to show behind the scenes stuff, your day to day life, a less curated side of you, or other lusty content- your amazing travels, how you prep your smoothie bowls, your favourite gym machine...

Stories also help you get seen when you tag people who REPOST you!! For example- "The podcast I'm binging right now is..." or "My favourite travel IG feed is..." "this yogi has such inspiring content..." and TAG that account. With any luck they'll repost to their stories which means their followers will now see you too!

Share whatever inspires you- authors, books, recipes, fitness accounts, photographers.... the possibilities are endless.

A WORD OF CAUTION:

DO NOT EVER use an outside app, no matter how tempting it is, to post on your instagram feed or to like/follow for you. THIS WILL GET YOU MARKED SPAM and instagram will stop showing your photos on people's feed. Instagram wants to create a community of REAL engaging people who love beauty. Play their game and you will succeed. Don't you want to contribute more beauty to the world?

**GOOD LUCK &
HAVE FUN!!**