

HOW AN EFFECTIVE INSTAGRAM STRATEGY CAN GROW A BRAND

SYNOPSIS

Across the globe, more than 3 billion people use Instagram every month. Social media has proven to influence purchase decisions, and brands can create awareness in ways that were never possible before. Businesses create appealing brand images through Instagram, as it is one of the vital steps in driving sales.

Use Instagram to:

- Increase reach and brand awareness
- Create a lasting presence in your market
- Develop a strategy that will earn you followers and offer the most rewarding content
- Combine and create techniques that will properly expand your brand

Read “How an Effective Instagram Strategy Can Grow a Brand” to learn how to take advantage of Instagram and create strategies that will build a successful social media campaign.

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INTRODUCTION

Social media has created a new channel for brands to market their businesses. Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms own this communication channel; however, Instagram offers brands unique opportunities to reach their market.

The median engagement rate for brand posts on Instagram is roughly eight times higher than on Facebook and 24 times higher than on X (formerly Twitter). These opportunities are best seized with creative, high-quality content, which gains the most traction when the two are combined. These days, businesses invest heavily in Instagram because of its ability to generate exposure. Over a third of Instagram users have used their mobile phone to purchase a product online, making them 70% more likely to do so than non-users. This clearly demonstrates that Instagram is a platform full of opportunities. However, companies have an increasingly difficult time creating a lasting presence in their market. Through this paper, you will learn the tools to develop an Instagram strategy that suits your brand.

BRANDS' INSTAGRAM POSTS EARN ABOUT 8 TIMES THE ENGAGEMENT OF THEIR FACEBOOK POSTS AND 24 TIMES THAT OF THEIR POSTS ON X

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Instagram has grown exponentially, passing 3 billion monthly active users in 2025, and marketers are using this growth as an opportunity and a tool to expand. However, as much as brands want to seize this opportunity, they face challenges in creating the most appropriate strategy. Social media and Instagram have created a new sphere of advertising and marketing that has never been seen before. Before the rise of the internet, understanding advertising and generating exposure was much easier. We mainly had television and print advertising, which followed a generally effective precedent. With the rise of Instagram and social media ads, however, marketers must enter a new platform of marketing. This brings us to the current problems with Instagram for businesses. Brands have extreme difficulty generating exposure and traffic online, especially when they are new to the market. Some of these problems are easy to fix, such as not using high-quality photos, inconsistent engagement and posting, not using hashtags, and the list goes on. This paper will go into greater detail about these small fixes later.

However, one of the biggest problems that requires creativity and innovation lies with the software itself. Instagram was built as a mobile-first app, and many of its features still work best on a phone rather than on a desktop. Also, while Instagram ads are now managed through the same Meta Ads Manager as Facebook ads, paid reach alone can't make up for weak content, which is another reason why having great post content is essential. Businesses must be as engaging as possible when creating content. Interact with your fans, use relevant hashtags, and make sure your brand image is consistent across all channels. This cannot be stressed enough: content is absolutely everything when it comes to an Instagram strategy. It is the make-or-break reason your strategy will or won't be successful.

As always when marketing your brand, you must find your target market and the content that influences it. Whether that means celebrities, personas, or other brands, companies must share content that pleases their audience.

As a result, creating an Instagram strategy is one of the most difficult tasks companies face online. Companies may ask themselves, “What should I post?” “Who are my influencers?” “How can I create a presence online?” and “What content appeals to my audience the most?” These are the questions a company should answer when developing an Instagram strategy.

EXISTING SOLUTIONS

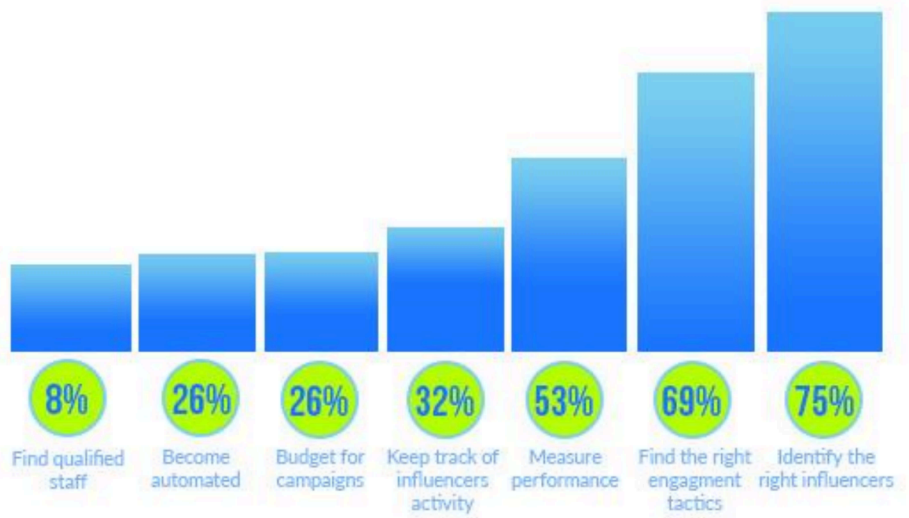
The point of creating an Instagram strategy is to generate as much traffic, engagement, and exposure online as possible. When you can create these three things, you are able to establish a presence and a niche in the market.

Success for brands on Instagram takes more than posting appealing pictures; the content must be engaging and give customers a call to action to interact with your brand. As you explore the potential of Instagram for your business, keep in mind the particular strengths of visual media for telling a compelling story about your brand.

When you put these principles into practice, you hope to create a photo that converts content into a call to action. Flowers for Dreams was featured by Instagram for Business in 2016, and its post for Namaste Charter School was considered one of the best call-to-action posts of that year.

This post has everything you need in a call-to-action Instagram post. It has a relevant and appealing image, tags the appropriate people, uses good hashtags, and includes catchy text.





MAIN CHALLENGES

When marketing your brand on Instagram, companies must find their target market and the content that influences it. As reported by Augure, the chart above shows the main challenges marketers face when marketing their businesses through influencers.

Identifying the right influencers is one of the more recent challenges marketers face, and finding them is another major key to creating as much brand awareness as possible. As Forbes reported, only 1% of millennials say a compelling advertisement would make them trust a brand more, while 33% rely on blogs before making a purchase decision. More recently, 39% of consumers said they have bought a product because a social media influencer recommended it.

We are dealing with a new generation of consumers. Marketers are essentially looking for influencers who will win over this generation. It is important not only to share your own content, but to share the content of others. Social media is a sharing platform. Identify your target audience, its influencers, and the topics it enjoys most. After you create the content your audience wants, engage with them by chatting with them and tagging them in your posts and photos.

However, there are potential risks to working with influencers. These influencers essentially become the face of your brand, so whatever decisions they make will automatically be associated with your brand's image. What they do in their personal time is completely out of your control, so you must be prepared to remove influencers who no longer align with your company's values.

As stated earlier, there are common mistakes that occur throughout the industry. Your Instagram posts should present your product or service as attractively as possible: images should be high quality and visually appealing and should be accentuated by bright lighting. Remember to grab users' attention as well: be persuasive, ask direct questions, include a call to action, and use relevant hashtags.

One of the most underused strategies on Instagram is engagement. Talk to your followers and make them feel like their opinions matter; creating engagement is like socializing in real life. Consumers form favorable brand images when brands communicate with them. A simple like or comment can go a long way. It is this type of recognition that creates the impressions you need on Instagram.

BETTER SOLUTIONS

IN 2016, INSTAGRAM WAS USED BY 48.8% OF BRANDS, A NUMBER EXPECTED TO RISE TO 70.7% IN 2017

In today's day and age, every brand has an Instagram strategy, and differentiating yourself from your competitors can be difficult. Instagram is extremely crowded, and you only hold a few seconds of a user's attention. In 2016, Instagram was used by 48.8% of brands, a number that was expected to rise to 70.7% in 2017. Those few seconds are vital, and there are always new ways to track your efforts and engagement.

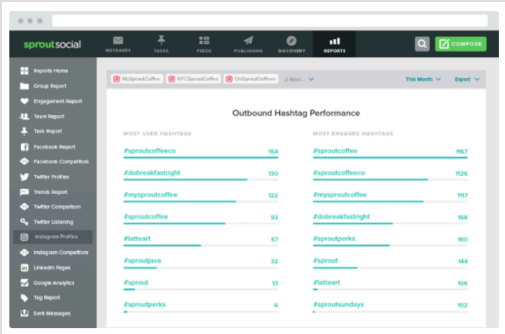
One of the biggest problems with Instagram was that it was virtually impossible to track the effectiveness of your posts. Other than likes and comments, there was really no way to see how consumers reacted to your content. Most importantly, you couldn't see which demographic your posts appealed to most. Knowing which demographic is most responsive to your content can go a long way: you start to see who your real target market is, or whether the demographic you are reaching is the one you are aiming for. Today, Instagram's built-in Insights give business accounts basic data on reach and audience demographics, but to compare platforms, track return on investment, and act on the data, you need some type of social media management or analytics service for your brand. Outsourcing can be a powerful solution, especially now that social media is a department of its own that cannot be neglected.

KNOWING WHICH DEMOGRAPHIC IS THE MOST RESPONSIVE TO YOUR CONTENT CAN GO A LONG WAY

Nearly every company uses some type of social media management service or tool today, and every business can benefit from hiring an agency to handle its social media and SEO needs. The most irresponsible mistake is to scatter these responsibilities throughout your company. Be professional and assign these tasks to an expert. While you may have to allocate budget to analytics tools and services, in the long run they can help you save money and make your business more profitable. You can track how many leads your social media efforts are bringing in and how many of those leads become customers.

When you have a social media manager, you establish a consistent voice for your company. Your business's voice can easily get lost if multiple people handle your business accounts. A social media manager will prevent this common problem and ensure that your business's voice stays consistent and in tune with your branding strategy and marketing plan.





Enable these managers to use a social media analytics service. As stated earlier, these analytics let you analyze the reach of your posts. Additional benefits include analyzing followers, identifying influencers, comparing platforms, improving ROI, and, essentially, saving time. As we delve further into the digital marketing side of Instagram strategy, it is important to stress the importance of SEO (search engine optimization). SEO should already be part of other areas of your digital plan, but Instagram SEO is a newer and effective strategy. Instagram is not a search engine like Google, but the most popular searches on Instagram have traditionally been hashtags. As reported, posts with at least one hashtag average 12.6% more engagement. You want to use the hashtags that get the most search volume and are relevant to your photos for maximum exposure. Today, however, more is not merrier: Instagram has cut the number of hashtags allowed per post from 30 to just a handful, and the company says fewer, more relevant tags perform better than a long list of generic ones. Hashtags can also look cleaner when they appear in the first comment rather than in the post's caption. Combine these strategies with a social media analytics service, and you will be well on your way to a strong Instagram strategy.

Another way to track engagement on Instagram is through links, which are a good way to measure how well you are capturing people's attention. Services like Bitly let you see how many people clicked a specific link. If your business involves online shopping or generates sales through your company's website, create a Bitly link and put it in your Instagram bio. These links let you monitor your stats and ultimately show you how popular your links are.

AS REPORTED, POSTS WITH AT LEAST ONE HASHTAG AVERAGE 12.6% MORE ENGAGEMENT

CASE STUDY

Flip Flop Shops is a thriving retailer that sells sandals to consumers all over the world. The company built its brand on the idea that everyone should live, work, and play with their toes exposed. While the company was well established, it did not have the social media or digital presence it needed. Its social media channels and website did not properly represent the values the company was built on. It needed to brand itself appropriately online, and Bright Age was the perfect partner to maximize its digital potential. Focused on creating as much awareness as possible, Bright Age used the practices described in this paper to create an Instagram strategy that propelled Flip Flop Shops into the digital world.

As every business should know, the first step in creating a marketing strategy is identifying your audience or target market. This was Bright Age's first step, and the team quickly realized that the product appeals to the surfing community and to younger women. This demographic is typical of the Instagram community, which is why most of the creative marketing effort went toward creating an Instagram strategy. This segmentation allowed Bright Age to suggest the right influencers, create the right hashtags, and ultimately develop the most rewarding post content.

DURING A SIX-MONTH CAMPAIGN, BRIGHT AGE WORKED WITH FLIP FLOP SHOPS TO LAUNCH A STRATEGY THAT INCREASED THEIR FOLLOWERS BY 47%

In addition to establishing Flip Flop Shops in the digital market, Bright Age kept fans happy and responsive. The team kept followers engaged by building relationships with them. Those who tagged Flip Flop Shops received a like and a personalized comment, and oftentimes even a prize during giveaway campaigns. Bright Age knows the importance of fostering mutually beneficial relationships, and keeping followers engaged is one of the best ways to build a favorable brand image.

During a six-month campaign, Bright Age worked with Flip Flop Shops to launch a strategy that increased its followers by 47%, and the brand's reputation on Instagram shot through the roof. As its popularity on Instagram started to rise, notable people started to take notice. Securing influencers was one of the strategies described in this paper, and Bright Age stressed its importance to Flip Flop Shops, especially since the brand's target demographic responds well to influencers. Bright Age was able to bring on Bethany Hamilton as an influencer for Flip Flop Shops. Bethany is a professional surfer and Surfing Hall of Fame inductee who, at the time, had an astounding 1.9 million followers on Instagram. Having her endorse Flip Flop Shops on Instagram is just one small example of what Bright Age can do for your Instagram campaign. Her influential voice in the surfing community and her 1.9 million Instagram followers made her the dream candidate as an influencer.

Bright Age's success with Flip Flop Shops is a powerful demonstration of the potential of Instagram. Flip Flop Shops found its niche on Instagram with the strategies Bright Age implemented. As these campaigns continue and the channel evolves, Bright Age will continue to develop new and innovative ideas to grow the brand's audience. Flip Flop Shops wants to create experiences like these throughout the company, and Bright Age is the perfect partner for creating these campaigns.

CONCLUSIONS AND CALL TO ACTION

This paper was created to show new and existing businesses how to start an Instagram strategy. The research provided shows the bare necessities of an Instagram strategy and which practices are proven to succeed. Although the problems are simple, the solutions may vary across markets and require high levels of creativity and analysis.

Whether businesses are new or established, the practices described in this paper can be used to create or maintain awareness and reach through Instagram. If your business is new, we recommend focusing your early efforts on creating great post content and using as many SEO tactics as possible. Breaking into the market is never easy. At this point in your Instagram strategy, it is imperative to create as much awareness as possible. Be relentless in this stage of marketing; engage with as many people as possible to find your niche in the market.

If you are a business with an existing Instagram strategy, make sure you have some type of social media management and analytics service. There is no point in marketing if you do not know the ROI and general effectiveness of your Instagram strategy. Many companies do not use these services, which is evident in their lackluster and inefficient Instagram strategies. Businesses need to implement these practices as soon as possible. These tactics are now the norm in the social media industry, and businesses need agencies like Bright Age to apply and customize these practices for their Instagram strategy.

As shown in the case study, Bright Age is the perfect partner to get your Instagram strategy to its maximum potential. No matter what market your business is in, Bright Age has a proven track record of delivering successful campaigns and results, regardless of your product or service. The team has stepped in and succeeded at different phases of companies' digital presence. They have created new strategies to get a company's digital presence off the ground and into the market. Bright Age has also remodeled countless strategies, quickly identifying what is wrong or neglected and getting a company's digital presence to where it needs to be. These types of client relationships are important to Bright Age. The team thrives on maintenance and improvement while never leaving clients uninformed, conducting monthly reports and meetings to make sure performance and efforts are up to par. There is a potential market your business is missing out on: Bright Age creates an average of 450,000 impressions per week across a variety of social media channels. Explore the Bright Age website and social media channels to see the opportunities available for your brand when working with an agency.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Bright Age is a boutique, full-service digital creative and social media agency dedicated to developing innovative campaigns that the agency and its clients are proud of.

Bright Age is passionate about social media, modern search engine optimization, web design, and digital marketing, and genuinely loves helping its clients' businesses grow. Every project is made with genuine care and attention. Rather than producing templates off an assembly line, Bright Age develops custom online marketing campaigns based on its clients'

goals.

Bright Age prides itself on being among the top experts in the digital creative industry. Successful Instagram strategies are only one of the many facets of the company; the team constantly seeks to discover, create, and improve digital marketing strategies for its clients. Its proven track record speaks for itself, as new and existing clients benefit from the custom-tailored strategies implemented in their businesses. No detail is overlooked or underused; Bright Age is one of those rare companies that put the needs of their clients first.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every business needs an Instagram strategy that is unique to its market; without one, it is missing out on millions of potential consumers. The main problem with Instagram is reach and awareness, as businesses have extreme difficulty breaking into and finding their niche in the market. With this paper, your business can develop the practices and strategies needed to create the Instagram presence your brand has always wanted. Bright Age has implemented many of these strategies with great success. Tactics like SEO, influencer marketing, and overall great content creation have helped the agency foster great relationships with its clients. Read more on Bright Age's website to get an in-depth understanding of its services and why it is among the top experts in the industry.

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