

Instagram Best Practices



Instagram is a media-based social network, so striking images and short videos receive the most engagement on it. Images and videos can be complemented by the use of captions and hashtags that will help drive additional engagement and make the posts easier to find.

INSTAGRAM MAXIMUM CHARACTER LIMITS

- Caption character limit: 2,200 characters
- Caption cut-off limit: 125 characters
- Hashtag limit: 30 hashtags
- Bio character limit: 150 characters
- Username character limit: 30 characters

INSTAGRAM PROFILE BEST PRACTICES

- Profile Photo: Clear, consistent, and professional.
- Bio: Short, snappy, and communicative.
- Username: Includes your name or business name.
- Website: Include a link to your website.
- Category: Please contact your compliance team if you have any questions as to which category you should select. In most cases, it should be Financial Services.
- Call-to-Action: Call, email, and directions are the three call-to-actions. To update this information, you can go to Edit Profile > Contact Options.



INSTAGRAM OPTIMAL IMAGE SIZES

- Square and Carousel: 1080 x 1080 pixels
- Landscape: 1080 x 566 pixels
- Portrait: 1080 x 1350 pixels

INSTAGRAM CAPTION BEST PRACTICES

Instagram is usually thought of as an image-first platform. Though aesthetically pleasing images pull folks in, a great caption is what keeps them engaged. The ideal length of Instagram captions is between 138 and 150 characters.

When thinking of what kind of caption to post, ask yourself:

- Who is my audience? Answering this will give you insight into the kind of caption that would keep them most engaged.
- Would they enjoy more casual captions with emojis? Or are they more on the professional side?

Keep these elements in mind when coming up with your captions:

- Emojis
- Campaign-specific hashtags
- General hashtags
- Length
- Questions
- Context
- Simple and to the point vs complex and in-depth

INSTAGRAM HASHTAG BEST PRACTICES

Ideal Number of Hashtags for Instagram Captions: 5-10



Hashtags help non-followers find your content. With this in mind, many people will stuff dozens of hashtags into their caption and subsequent comments in order to maximize visibility. However, doing this too often might result in getting your account shadowbanned by Instagram, causing your posts to not show up in searches for hashtags anymore.

It's better to play it safe and stick to just 5-10 relevant hashtags per post. Some top hashtags for financial services companies are:

#Financialfreedom

#Financialadvisor

#insurance

#insuranceagent

Change It Up

Make sure each set of hashtags you use actually fit the content you're posting. While it's good to have a set of consistent ones that you use every time, you don't want to use the hashtag #retirementplanning if your post doesn't mention it. Play around with different strategies. Do you get discovered more if you use hashtags to describe what's in the picture or when your hashtags correspond to what's mentioned in your caption?

Create Your Own Hashtags

Hashtags help your content get discovered, but they're also a key way to organize your posts! For example, if you're running a series of Instagram posts with personal finance tips, a follower might be interested in all of the posts in that series but don't want to scroll through your feed to find them all. Creating a custom hashtag like #[name]PersonalFinanceTips would be a great idea. This helps build a sense of community around your content too.

INSTAGRAM IMAGE BEST PRACTICES

Images on Instagram need to interest the user. The reason why people are on Instagram are to scroll through a feed of photos. You don't have to be a professional photographer to take amazing photos. Just keep the following things in mind if you do create custom photo content:

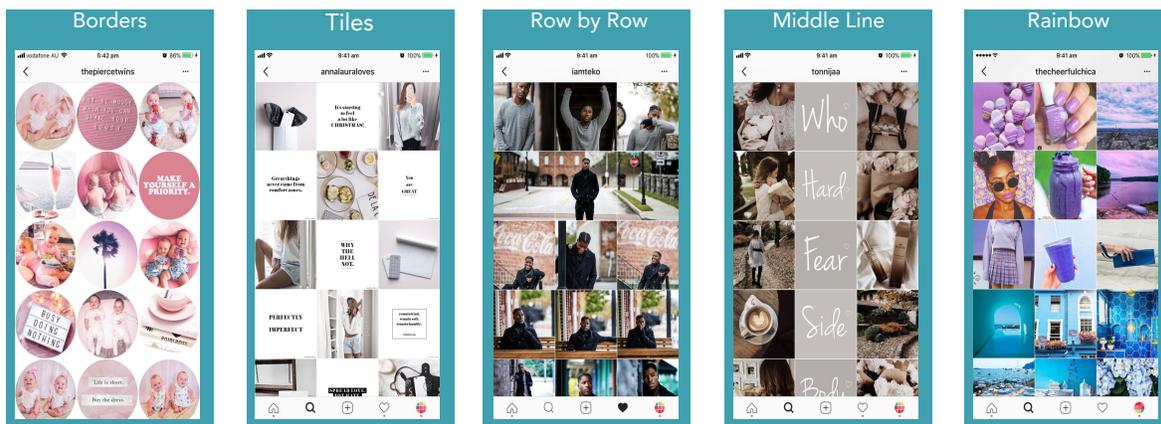
- **Lighting:** Use natural lighting whenever you can but don't take photos in direct sunlight.
- **The Rule of Thirds:** If you can, turn on a grid in your Camera app that divides the screen into 9 boxes. Wherever there is an intersection, position your subject there. This creates more dynamic photos.
- **Focus:** Set your camera focus on the subject. This can usually be done by tapping on it on your screen.
- **Edit:** You can edit your photos on Instagram directly or you can use a third-party app or Photoshop. When editing, avoid the filters if you can and go straight to playing around with the Brightness, Contrast, and Saturation.



INSTAGRAM FEED BEST PRACTICES

Your Instagram Feed is the summation of all of your Instagram posts. It's recommended that for designing your feed, you turn on Grid. From here, you can decide what kind of feed theme you want. Here are some things to keep in mind:

1. **Color Scheme:** Ideally, a feed would only feature 2-3 color at most in order to keep the feed consistent. These colors would also be placed evenly across your grid for an aesthetically pleasing effect.
2. **Editing:** When editing your photos, make sure to keep it consistent across posts. For example, if your posts tend to be edited to be bright and saturated, a dark and gray photo might not quite fit in.
3. **Subject Matter:** This can be photos of people, animals, stock photos, event photos, or text posts like quotes. Whatever subjects you decide to work with, make sure they're arranged in a way that makes sense, which leads us to the grid layout.
4. **Grid Layout:** Besides your profile photo and bio, your grid of photos is the first impression you'll leave on visitors to your business profile. You need to keep the layout in mind when posting. There are seven types of grid layouts you can go for:
 - a. **Squares:** This is the easiest one. Just post as you go along making sure to keep the color scheme and filters consistent.
 - b. **Diagonal:** Pick a theme or color and then set up your feed so that theme or color is consistent at a diagonal.
 - c. **Tiles:** This is similar to Squares, but you create a pattern with each square. A common pattern is image, quote, image, quote.
 - d. **Row by Row:** Each row is a consistent theme with each other. For example, you can have one row dedicated to photos of people and another dedicated to quotes.
 - e. **Line in the Middle:** This creates an illusion of a line in the middle of your feed, segmenting your grid into three parts.
 - f. **Rainbow Feed:** Use a different color in your feed every 3, 6, or 9 photos.
 - g. **Borders:** Use editing apps to create a white border around each image. For example, each post can be a circle or have a small white border.



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