
LEARN **THE SECRETS**
TO BUILDING A **MONEY**
MAKING BRAND ON
Instagram



LEARN HOW TO TURN YOUR
INSTAGRAM PAGE INTO
A **MONEY MAKING** MACHINE

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INTRODUCTION: INSTAGRAM FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Instagram has gone from Twitter's little cousin to one of the top social media platforms. Instagram was founded in 2010 and now has over 500 million active users on its site. With the exception of Facebook and YouTube, Instagram is the most popular social media platform, and it is a place where you can get up close and personal with your followers, your clients, and your target audience by letting them see what goes on in your daily life through photos and short videos. You can even stream to a live audience on Instagram!

Before I start talking about how to grow your Instagram, let me introduce myself. I'm Annetta Powell, and I'm a serial Entrepreneur. I was born to deaf parents and grew up in the Metro Detroit area. I escaped the nine-to-five rat race by building a real estate empire within the Metro Detroit Area. I purchased my first real estate property for \$18,000. After renovating it, I sold it for a profit of \$24,000. Over the next several years, I sold more than 600 properties, and I generated over \$50 million dollars in real estate sales.

It wasn't all up from there, though. In 2008, the bottom fell out of the housing market, and I was investigated for real estate fraud. I ended up serving some time in prison. My time in prison was a blessing: it made me realize the way to achieve true, lasting wealth is through diversifying my income.

Because of these experiences, I now consider myself a serial entrepreneur. I am an author and a real estate investor. I own a luxury party bus company, five tax franchises known as the Tax Experts, a women's clothing store, and I'm not stopping there. The key to building wealth is to build a brand, diversify your income, and know how to funnel potential clients into your business.

That's where Instagram comes in. In the years I've been on Instagram, my profile has grown to add over a thousand new followers each and every week, and I am consistently adding new content every single day with posts, Instagram Stories, and IGTV. I didn't grow my Instagram following overnight. I grew it through hard work and quality content, and you can, too.



WHY IS INSTAGRAM **GOOD FOR BUSINESSES?**

Engagement. Engagement is a combination of a lot of little things such as post visibility, commenting, and the chances of your post being shared or going “viral” on the platform. Instagram is so popular because it feels more personal than Facebook, it is easier to use than Twitter, and studies have shown that Instagram engagement ranks the highest over all the social media platforms. Instagram outranks Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr for the most engaged followers.

Instagram is a mobile-exclusive platform, which means you can’t type it into your web browser on a computer and get to it. It’s easy to use when you’re out and about, and it’s often the first application people open when they have a second here or there. It’s a very in-the-moment platform, unlike the others.

Instagram is also simple to use. It focuses on pictures and has an infinite scroll of new content. If someone types in the hashtag “#art”, at least 100 new posts are there for them to look at. Wait five minutes and there are 100 more. Studies show that humans prefer to process information through sight, and Instagram taps into that very nature with its sleek visual platform.

The best part about Instagram, however, is how accessible it is. A wide number of people use Instagram, and it targets a younger audience. The majority of Instagram users are under 30 years old, which keeps the platform fresh and energetic-- something a lot of older platforms lose over the years as the original users age and become disinterested. The constant influx of new, younger users means there are always new people to engage and introduce to your product, your brand, and your business.

WHAT ARE THE DOWNSIDES?

Well, nothing's perfect. Instagram was created for pictures and with the goal of people staying in the app for as long as possible. Because of this, you cannot publish links in individual Instagram posts (you can put them on your profile or do paid advertisements, but we'll get to that later). There's a good and bad to this. For marketers and entrepreneurs like us, it cuts down on the people we can direct back to our website. For consumers, it's preferred because they're not always being sold something or herded from one site to the other. Consumers trust Instagram which is why the platform is so amazing.

It's also not text focused. While some people will read the captions of posts, it's not the main focus of Instagram. The visual is the main focus. A lot of users will post quotes or words to live by as photos in their feed, but as far as your customers reading a caption? Likely not. Along with that, Instagram wasn't built for back and forth conversations. Their direct-message system is pretty limiting overall, so once you move to discussing a business venture, it's best to do it through e-mail or on another social media platform.

Even with its downsides, Instagram is the platform you should be utilizing for your brand. So...

Are you ready to jump into Instagram for your business? Here are ten tips to help you be a superstar on Instagram:

- 1 Pick a good username & complete your profile.** I know this isn't really a tip, but it's still important. Your username is the first thing everyone's going to see, so you need to keep it consistent with your brand. You also need to make sure your profile is completely filled out. Yes, this means adding a photo, a website, and a little bit about yourself, because Instagram users need to know you're a real person!
- 2 Stick with a theme (your niche).** You need to pick a theme and stick with it for 80% of your posts. It's okay to deviate a little bit here and there, but the majority of your posts should keep with what you're trying to present. There are many ways to keep with theme, be it sticking with certain colors or maintaining consistency with the type of photos you post.
- 3 Use relevant hashtags.** Instagram will penalize you for using unrelated hashtags and using too many hashtags. Having a wall of hashtags isn't attractive or clean. Picking up to thirty relevant hashtags is the way to go-- and you should make one of those hashtags original to your brand. As you post throughout the day, rotate through your hashtags, so you're not using the same ones for every single photo.
- 4 Tag other people and places.** Let people know where you are. When searching for businesses, a lot of people will search by location on Instagram, so when you post a photo, don't be shy about letting your followers know what city and state you're in. If you ate at a nice restaurant, tag the restaurant and let others know where to get some good food.

5

Keep up with trends. Instagram has some steady trends such as #MCM (man crush Mondays), #WCW (woman crush Wednesdays), and #Flashbackfriday. These trends change over time, but keeping up with them and catering to them will extend your reach on the platform.

6

Utilize all of Instagram. There's more to Instagram than just posting one photo a day. You can post a series of photos or a video. You can post on Instagram Stories, and you can even do a live chat with your followers. To be successful on Instagram, you need to make all of these things work for you.

7

Grow Organically. Organic growth can take time, but slow and steady wins the race. Buying followers or playing games to get followers fast isn't going to give you the clientele you want. It's better to have a hundred engaged followers than a thousand followers who don't know anything about your business and aren't your target audience.

8

Be consistent. Instagram values consistency. Because the platform is so fast-paced, you need to have a steady supply of content ready to show the world. You should try to post a minimum of three times a day on Instagram: once in the morning, around the middle of the day, and at night. You also need to get into the habit of replying to your followers and using similar hashtags for all of your posts.

9

Link to your other social media. Share your Instagram posts on your other platforms. You can share your posts through Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr just to name a few. The more exposure the better when it comes to growing your tribe on Instagram.

10

Engage, Engage, Engage. Last but definitely not least, you have to engage with your audience. If you're always posting and never going out and making friends, how are people going to find you? You can't sit back and wait for people to come to you, you have to do a little leg work on your own.

Let's get one thing straight: you won't become an Instagram success overnight. And if you do, it's going to be a very sleepless night for you. Growing a good Instagram following takes time and patience. These ten steps will give you the tools you need to grow an organic and engaging following that will filter through all of your other platforms.

If you're ready, let's jump right into the first step for being successful on Instagram. It's time to pick a username and fill out your profile.



1. PICK A USERNAME AND COMPLETE YOUR PROFILE.

Picking a username and completing your Instagram profile seems like the easy work, doesn't it? It should be, but some people get stuck on what to write about themselves, whether to go playful or serious, and how much to reveal right from the start.

The best Instagram profiles have a few things in common. First, they all seem real, honest, and approachable. There's a way you speak as a business professional and there's a way you talk to your friends. Instagram offers a behind-the-scenes feel to any business, so it warrants a different approach than the usual formal business tone. Second, they're completely developed with unique hashtags and on-brand profile pictures. Instagram is a visual platform, so when a user searches for another user, the first thing they see is their username and their profile picture. And when you create a brand-specific hashtag, it gives visitors a natural next step rather than completely leaving your profile. Third, they're usually public. Who wants to follow a private profile? It's fishy!

Let's talk about the steps to creating a good Instagram profile:

- 1 Pick an easy, searchable username.** Put simply, you want to use your business name, or some variant, for your username. There's leeway here, and you can change your username if you find that it doesn't really work. Given how big the Instagram platform is, you may have to do some creative thinking when it comes to your username, but adding weird numbers and symbols isn't the way to spice it up. If you can't get the username you want, adding an underscore is a simple way to fix the problem.
- 2 Add your business name (or personal name if your brand is yourself).** Once you've worked out a username, you need to add your business name. If you're a personal brand or a sole proprietor, you can put your full name in the business spot, or alternatively use your full name as your username and a tagline in your business spot. Either one is acceptable, but both spots need to be filled with something. Having your business name filled gives users a second way to find you in case your username doesn't completely match your business.

3

Add your profile picture and keep it related to your brand. I know adding pictures is awkward, but you have to do it. Depending on what you want to portray, you can add your business logo or a picture of yourself. Either way, your profile picture should be easily recognizable. You should use a picture around 150x150 pixels, and Instagram will crop the photo for you. Once you set your profile picture, leave it! As your business grows, this is what visitors will remember you by, so you don't want to change it.

4

Write your 150-character bio. Your character bio is your first chance to really grab visitors. This bio establishes the voice of your Instagram. The maximum amount of characters you can use on your Instagram bio is 150 characters. So, in 150 characters or less, you need to give your visitors a reason to follow you, add a hint of your personality, and create your own unique hashtag. You should also encourage an action through the use of your shared hashtag, like offering a chance to be featured on your Instagram.

5

Have a link to your website. The only place you can utilize links on Instagram is in your profile. While users love this feature, business owners don't appreciate it so much. You absolutely have to include your link in your bio or there's no way to get visitors from Instagram to your website. You can change your website link as many times as you want or utilize Linktree to put all your links on one easy-to-setup page.

6

Keep your profile public. When you make an Instagram profile, it is automatically set to public. For a business, you want to keep it public, so anyone can view the profile and the posts on Instagram. The main reason for keeping the profile public is because not every frequent visitor is going to follow you, but they'll still stop by regularly to check new pictures! If your profile is private, you'll deter people from returning to your profile.

I encourage you to complete all six of these things on your profile before you start posting photos. If you've already posted photos, that's okay! You can change your profile at any time.

While you're developing your Instagram profile, you want to opt for an Instagram business account. With an Instagram business account, you can review post performance and follower growth. Business accounts also have a contact button that can send direct messages to the brand representative. However, the best part about a business account is utilizing Instagram advertising-- the only way to direct people from a post to your website. By paying either per click or per impression, you can direct visitors straight from a promoted post to any website you want.

With your account set up, it's time to get down to the details. Have you thought about the look and feel you want for your Instagram? If not, it's time to think about it now.

2. STICK WITH A THEME (YOUR NICHE)

You probably haven't given a lot of thought to the photos you're putting on Instagram, but now it's time to clean up your feed. The first thing you need to do is make sure you're focused on your brand. For example, if you're an artist, no one cares about what you ate for dinner yesterday. Likewise, if you're a personal trainer, everyone cares about what you ate and how you look and work out, but they don't want to see your daughter's latest crayon drawing.

ARE INSTAGRAM THEMES REALLY THAT IMPORTANT?

YES! They really are. Instagram is like a photo album, and some people are naturally good at posting pictures that stick to a theme and look uniform, while others aren't, and it takes them a little bit of practice to stick to the rules. It's okay if you're having trouble getting your Instagram to look uniform, there are a few basic rules you can follow to instantly improve the look of your feed. But first, why does your Instagram need a theme?

Your Instagram needs a theme because it needs to be cohesive and reliable. When people know what to expect from your feed, they can make an informed decision on what content you're likely to post, and they are more likely to follow you as well. It's all about security and clarity. Leave the surprises for a birthday party because you don't want them on your Instagram.

HOW TO PICK AN INSTAGRAM THEME.

Not everyone is a famous fashion photographer, but you don't need a fancy camera and four years of photography school to have beautiful feed. All you need to do is decide where you want to go with your theme and stick with it. Let's talk about some really simple themes for your Instagram:

1 White border. This is the easiest theme to utilize if you have absolutely no fashion sense to speak of. Terrible at color schemes? Terrible trying to set up a camera for a specific shot? No worries, this one can be all done in the post production of your photo. The white border makes your feed look like a quick and easy gallery wall, and even if all of the photos are drastically different, it gives them space to breathe and a sense of uniformity.

2 Same filter and tint. It's easy, I promise. All you have to do is take all the photos you want, and when you go to post them on your Instagram, you pick the same filter and use it every single time. By picking the perfect filter, you can make your whole feed feel warm and cozy, bright and lively, or quirky and ethereal. Not only that, but also people will recognize your photos immediately when they see them on their Instagram feed.

3

White background. All right, this one is not for the faint of heart. A white background theme takes a lot of planning and a lot of patience, but it comes out beautifully when it's done right. A white background theme means you have a white background lifestyle (it also means you probably don't have children or pets). White background themes are great for personal stylists or lifestyle brands and will definitely stand out against all the busy backgrounds and busy photographs you're competing with.

4

Color palette. This is another one that can be difficult to stick with but will get easier over time. Picking a color palette is similar to picking a filter and tint except you take the pictures that way. You can pick a main color and then two coordinating colors (not including white and black) to center your feed around. For example, if you pick teal as your main color, you need to include something teal in every photograph.

5

Black and white. If you like the artist feel of the color palette or white background theme, but are having trouble sticking to it, the black and white theme is your best friend. It's another simple theme to stick to because it only requires you to take photographs and use the black and white filter on them. You'll quickly learn that not everything looks good in black and white, but the learning curve is shallow, and you'll have a beautiful Instagram theme in no time!

Instagram themes aren't all about the color palette you choose or the filters you put on your photographs. You still have to stay true to your brand and your business when you're posting your photos! Ideally you want to combine a visual theme with your brand theme. Such as, if you post a lot of different photos from live events and meeting with clients, the white border theme could be the best because it creates a sense of unity even though you're going to post a lot of different types of pictures. If you want an easy artistic feel, but travel around frequently, then picking the same filter and tint could be the way to go.

You should stay on brand for 80% of your posts. It's okay to let your hair down, so to speak, for the other 20% of them. Once you decide on your theme, it's time to start tagging your beautiful photos!





3. USE RELEVANT HASHTAGS

Everyone has something to say on using hashtags. Some people swear by them, some people don't like them at all. If you're starting a new Instagram, you need to utilize hashtags, so others can discover your account. If you've got a steady following of people, using hashtags isn't as important as posting regularly.

There are three different types of hashtags: brand hashtags, community hashtags, and promotional hashtags. Brand hashtags are hashtags directly related to your business. The purpose of a brand hashtag is for the brand and the audience to share relevant content. Brand hashtags can be the business name, a name of a product, or something unrelated to the brand name but spreads the brand identity.

A community hashtag is similar to a brand hashtag in that it still connects users by topic, but the difference is community hashtags are broader, such as #flashbackfriday or #photography. These hashtags don't relate to a specific business, but they still connect people by common theme.

The last type of hashtag is a promotional hashtag. Unlike brand hashtags and community hashtags, promotional hashtags are short-term use. Promotional hashtags are primarily used for entering contests, raising money, or to achieve other short-term goals. They fade away once the task is completed.

HOW MANY HASHTAGS SHOULD I USE?

If you're not careful, Instagram can block your account from being searchable. This can happen because of too much spam activity, using irrelevant hashtags, or just using too many hashtags. You should never use unrelated hashtags to file your posts, and you should be wary of using too many hashtags at the same time. The ideal number of hashtags is ten to fifteen, but no more than thirty.

When you post your photo, after you type your caption, you should use the three most relevant hashtags in your description. One hashtag should be your brand hashtag, and the other two can be community hashtags or promotional hashtags. You should insert the other seven hashtags as the first comment of your post.

HOW DO I PICK HASHTAGS?

There are absolutely no rules to creating and using hashtags, but there are some tips to follow to make your brand as searchable as possible and give your brand a unique feel. Let's talk about how to pick hashtags for your Instagram posts:

- 1 Develop a brand hashtag.** First you want to develop a brand hashtag. It can relate to a specific product (a bestselling product), or it can include the name of your company in the hashtag. Some examples from businesses are: #forevergirl, #shareacoke, and #MyCalvins. The key to making a brand tag work is usually by offering your followers a chance to be featured on your page as an exchange for using the hashtag. This brand-to-follower interaction creates a space where followers or new visitors can check out your brand's content, and it gives you an almost unlimited amount of options for posts when you run out of scheduled items or need an Instagram vacation.
- 2 Use location-based hashtags.** Unless you live in a really small town, every city has its own hashtags. If you do live in a small town that doesn't have location-based hashtags, then it's your opportunity to start a new trend! Adding some location-based hashtags to your posts is a good way to see what the rest of your immediate community is up to-- not just the internet world. This is also a good way to connect with local businesses you may not find any other way.
- 3 Pick several community-based hashtags related to your brand.** Think of community-based hashtags as filler. Once you've gotten the necessary hashtags out of the way (your brand hashtag and your city hashtag), then you can add the rest of the hashtags behind those. Community hashtags are like broad search terms, but like I said before, you have to keep them related to your brand. When you look for community-based hashtags, look for hashtags that have at least 100,000 posts. These are popular hashtags and will get you the most exposure, the most bang for your buck.

The ideal number of hashtags per post is ten. Ten hashtags is enough for exposure and maintains a clean appearance. However, Instagram doesn't like it when the same hashtags are on multiple posts in the same day. For this reason, you should have at least thirty hashtags to pick from when you're scheduling your posts.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ADD UNRELATED HASHTAGS?

If you add hashtags that don't relate to you or your business, Instagram can potentially shadowban your account. Shadowbanning can occur for many reasons. The most common reason is when suspicious activity happens on your account, such as using unrelated hashtags or the exact same hashtags in the same order all the time. Shadowbanning can also occur if you like or follow too many people at one time.

When you're shadowbanned, only your followers see the things you post. Your posts won't show up publicly under specific hashtags, and your visibility is ruined for the duration of the ban. Shadowbanning can last for days to weeks, but the best way to have your account return to normal is to act normal. It is discouraging, but there are other ways to get yourself noticed on Instagram without using hashtags.

4. TAG OTHER PEOPLE AND PLACES

Tagging people on Instagram is similar to tagging people on Facebook. After you type your caption, there is an option to “Tag People”. This option will allow you to tag spots in the photo with other users’ names. Just like on Facebook, when you tag a user, they get a notification that they’ve been tagged in a photo, and the tagged photo stays on their profile and yours.

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TAGGING AND USING THE @ FEATURE?

Both features are fantastic for tagging people and other businesses in your posts, but because of the limited amount of notifications that show up on a user’s feed, the tag feature is better for making sure the other person sees it. They get the notification and they see the image they were tagged in, while the @ feature only shows the mention on the feed.

WHEN SHOULD YOU TAG PEOPLE ON INSTAGRAM?

Tagging is either overused or underused. A lot of people who should be using tags, don’t bother utilizing them. And then there are people who tag everyone in their family on a quote post. So, when should you actually use tags?

- 1** **When you’re out socializing somewhere with someone.** This is the best time to give a little boost to everyone’s Instagram page-- including the business! When you’re out at a business meeting, out at an event, or just out for coffee with a friend, don’t hesitate to snap a picture and tag the person in it. The picture can be of you and the other person, of the food, or of the amazing mountainous view. Tagging businesses, especially eateries, is a great way to let the business know you enjoyed the location, too.
- 2** **Your favorite/well used products.** Do you use the same face mask every single morning? Is it one of those products that you turn back around to get if you forget it on a road trip? If so, then tag the business and let them know how much you love the product! They’ll appreciate it, and everyone who stops by their page will be able to see your glowing review of their product.
- 3** **Your business partners or affiliates.** Even if it’s just a regular day at the office, you should tag your business partner sometimes. It goes the same way with products or brands you closely associated with. If you’re a personal trainer and you get supplies from a particular company, don’t hesitate to tag them in a post occasionally. Some people only buy things based on recommendations, so if you work with a company you support and believe in, don’t hesitate to tell your followers!

4

Answering questions. Do you have commonly asked questions? If so, a great way to answer the question all in one go (and answer for the people who are too shy to ask) is to make a post about it and tag everyone who asked the question. Bonus, you can answer multiple questions in the same post, or create an Instagram Story.

5

Contest Winners, Shout Outs, Reprogramming. Gone are the days where you have to manually track down a follower to let them know they won a prize. The quickest and easiest way to get the word out is to do a tagged post for the contest winner. Likewise, if you want to give a shout out to a customer, a fan, or just someone who deserves a little extra recognition (like the secretary), don't hesitate to tag them in a post! And, of course, if you regram someone else's content, it's respectful to tag the original poster of the content so everyone knows who created it.

Remember how I said sometimes people overuse the tags? Here are some times where you should think twice about tagging someone in your post.

1

Motivational posts. Unless the person is your all-time best friend and the quote relates directly to their lives, tagging someone in a motivational post is a no-no. It's unnecessary and can become a little awkward. It's okay to do this occasionally, but it's not a good idea to make a habit out of it.

2

The same people all the time. If you find yourself tagging the same couple of people all the time, you need to find some new friends, and your current ones are probably getting annoyed with all of the tagging.

3

Just for more engagement. I have seen some people tag random businesses and people strictly for more engagement. Don't do this. Anything that makes a business look too-eager for a following is a red flag to visitors and potential customers.

Tagging is a fun way to add a little something extra to your Instagram posts and really get into the community of Instagram. Because almost every business has an Instagram, it's easy to include a tag on your posts. However, don't go overboard and start tagging everything you can think of each post! Remember to be discerning with how often you tag people and places. You don't want to appear desperate to potential clients, and you don't want to risk Instagram flagging your account with suspicious activity.

When it comes to tagging, remember some things go in and out of style and it's important to be up with the times and know what's popular today. If the current trend is eco-friendly makeup, then tagging a brand that tests on animals is probably not a good idea. So, let's talk about keeping up with trends.





5. KEEP UP WITH TRENDS

One reason social media is so popular is because it is America's break room. What I mean is everyone uses social media to comment on the goings-on in the world. Now, it's never a good idea to get really political on your business page, but keeping up with relevant hashtags is important.

Customers like businesses that are real, not businesses that only focus on promoting their products. Participating in popular hashtags like #WCW, #MCM, and #throwbackthursday not only make your business seem real and organic, it also increases the number of people your posts reach. Using the trending hashtags is an easy way to get yourself in front of new people and out of the same basic social circle.

HOW DO I FIND THE CURRENT TRENDS?

Trends fall into two categories: temporary trend hashtags and long-standing hashtags. For example, a hashtag based on a current event or natural disaster is a temporary hashtag. The hashtag will be active while the current event or natural disaster is going on, but once it is over, the hashtag will fade away. This doesn't mean you shouldn't use temporary hashtags, it just means eventually they will have to be replaced with a new hashtag.

Long-standing hashtags are just like they sound. They're universal things that anyone from anywhere can post under. An example of a longstanding hashtag could be "#Smallbusinesssaturday" or "#artist". Both of these hashtags are generic enough to include a wide variety of people, and they're abstract enough to last for a very long time.

The easiest way to find current trends is to take a moment to search for different hashtags before you start using them. Instagram will show you how many posts are under each tag. Ideally, for your long-standing hashtags, you want the hashtags to have a wealth of posts under them. Hashtags that only have a few thousand posts aren't frequently searched. So, unless it's something very specific and on target, you want popular hashtags.

Not sure where to start with hashtags? Here are a few of my favorite hashtags and why I like them:

1 **#photooftheday / #picoftheday.** I like to use these two when I really try for a photo. Maybe the photo is of a beautiful location, a picture of myself that I'm really pleased with, or a photo of the book I just finished. Whatever it is, if it's on the artistic side, I use this hashtag.

2 **#tbt / #fbf.** These stand for "throwback Thursday" and "flashback Friday". Thursdays and Fridays are days where you're allowed to post something old. You can post something as old as a baby picture, or something that happened last week that you forgot about. As long as it didn't happen the same day, it works for the hashtag. I love this one because I'm always forgetting to post things, and by the end of the week, I'm ready for a social media mini-vacation.

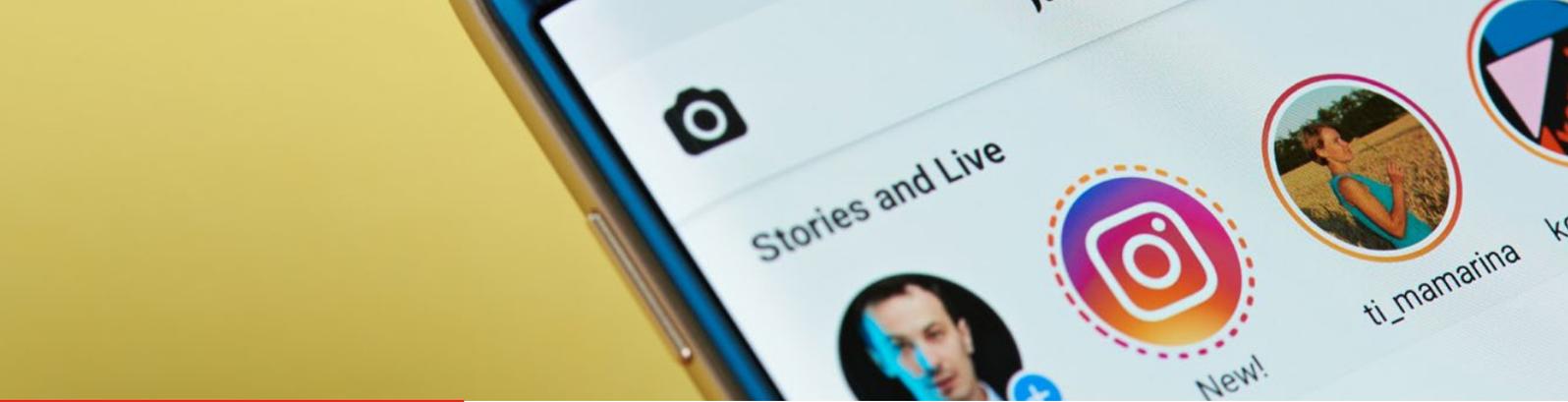
3 **#ootd / #lifestyle.** "Outfit of the Day" is a popular hashtag for anyone who's into fashion or style. "Outfit of the Day" can be a picture of someone wearing an outfit or an outfit neatly laid out for visitors to see. It all depends on your branding and how comfortable you are with your selfies! The "lifestyle" hashtag can work for anyone and can be used on all sorts of posts from meal pictures to workout selfies -- it's all lifestyle.

4 **#motivation / #inspiration.** If I'm not in the mood to post photos I've taken, I will post inspirational quotes. I use these tags when I do. I also make sure I add my name on the motivational post, so others can know who created it. And sometimes, if I don't feel like creating my own motivational quote, I will regram some of the beautifully designed quotes other people have already posted. If I regram something, I always tag the other user in the post!

As long as you keep up with current events or take the time to do a little research before you get started, you should have no problem keeping up with the trends of Instagram, and what hashtags are going in and out of style. Don't forget to post pictures with a mix of temporary hashtags and long-term hashtags.

Instagram trends aren't limited to keeping up with the most popular hashtags. Instagram is always adding new ways to communicate with fans and followers, and even if you're not crazy about Instagram's newest feature, you should take advantage of the opportunities it provides.





6. UTILIZE ALL OF INSTAGRAM

When Instagram was first launched, it focused on picture content and creating a beautiful interface. Now, almost ten years later, Instagram has so many unique features to enhance its platform. With Instagram, you can post video content, multiple pictures, create stories, and even reply to direct messages with a video message instead of text. Instagram is always introducing new and unique features to make the platform a powerhouse for business owners and to keep it up to date with what its users like.

The bottom line is: if you're not using all the features Instagram has to offer, then you're not making the most of an amazing social media platform. Let's talk about some of the best features for business owners:

- 1 Instagram Stories.** I know Instagram stories aren't a super new feature, but if you've been around the Instagram block for a while, you may not have really gotten into this trend. Instagram stories allow you to string together several similar posts or videos. With Instagram stories, you can give users an extra peek into your life. You can add photographs that wouldn't fit into your curated feed. Instagram stories are accessible for only twenty-four hours and Instagram doesn't penalize you for posting too many stories! This means you can post one story per day, multiple stories a day, or start one story and add to it throughout the day.
- 2 Instagram Video Chat (IGTV).** Instagram Video Chat and Instagram Live Video launched recently. With Instagram Live Video, you can engage with your audience in real-time, meaning you can have a live question and answer session, you can share a workout session in real time, or you can get immediate feedback on ideas. Business owners can use Instagram Live for announcements, product launches, Q&A sessions, behind the scenes, and Instagram take-overs.
- 3 Group Video Chat with Instagram Direct.** Among the many features on Instagram, they've now added a group chat feature. Do you ever get sick of trying to simultaneously talk on the phone and find something on Instagram? Or how about if your best friend has an Android phone and you have an iPhone? With Instagram Group Video Chat, these pesky problems are solved. You can call up to four people and browse Instagram at the same time. For business owners, this means you can conduct conference calls or directly reply to clients without needing another application.



Instagram Stickers. Instagram stickers are for use on Instagram Stories, and they allow you to add a little more life and flavor to your photographs. There are four main types of Instagram stickers: GIF stickers, sticker polls, stickers on posts, and photo stickers.

- With GIF stickers, you can select it and place it anywhere in your Instagram Story. You can lock the sticker in place, adjust the size, and adjust the angle
- Business owners can use sticker polls to ask their followers questions. If you're trying to figure out what new product you should release, or when is the best time for a live video, a sticker poll may be the way to go. Users enjoy sticker polls because it's a way to directly interact with influencers.
- Stickers on posts and photo stickers add even more flavor to your posts. You can add hashtags or little comments to your Instagram photos, and even place a photo within another photo.



Instagram Shoppable Posts. If you're selling physical products, utilizing the Shopping on Instagram program can take your business to the next level. Because Instagram is such a visual platform, advertising physical products is easier for business owners and tasteful for Instagram users. Instagram and Shopify have teamed up to give users the ability to shop on Instagram. Shoppable posts have a little shopping bag icon on the corner. That's it. Users can view and explore the product all within the Instagram application, but the selling transaction happens on the company's website.



Instagram Advertising. Instagram Advertising allows you to boost specific posts, just like on Facebook. You can advertise on Instagram to grow brand exposure, send people your website, and start current leads down a sales funnel to convert them into sales. Instagram advertising is one of the most effective methods of advertising with 60% of people saying they discover new products on Instagram, and over 70% of people saying they take action when inspired by a post. If you have a visual brand, advertising on Instagram is clutch for business growth.

DIVERSIFYING YOUR CONTENT

As a business owner, it's important to be diverse because if you lack diversity, it's like leaving potential customers on the table. Every new Instagram feature is a chance to stretch your reach and touch new customers. It's just like maintaining different revenue streams. Each method of communication in Instagram can serve as a funnel back to the ultimate product you are trying to sell.

Diversifying your content has another benefit: it can help you grow your following exponentially.



7. GROW ORGANICALLY

For your Instagram to be a viable funnel for your business, you have to have followers. A lot of followers, because realistically only ten percent of your followers will buy anything from your business-- and ten percent is thinking positively. It could be less. So, to make Instagram work for you, you're going to need fans.

ARE ALL FANS EQUAL?

The worst thing you can do for your Instagram is to purchase followers or purchase likes. When you purchase followers, you can end up with a lot of inactive followers and no engagement. Not only is this bad for the Instagram algorithms, this behavior also turns real followers away from your page.

Now, there's nothing wrong with silent followers. There will always be followers who don't publicly regram, like, or comment on your posts or stories. There will always be followers who will never spend a dime on your business. Both of these are okay because the silent follower may end up spending the most money on your business, while the person who comments, likes, and regrams the most may never spend a single dollar.

My point is, fans aren't equal, but as long as every fan is a real person, they have a place in your business and can help you achieve your goals.

The secret to organic growth is three things:

- 1 Posting Consistently.** Even if you can't post daily or three times a day on Instagram, developing some sort of consistent posting schedule is key for quick growth. Ideally, you want to post three times a day on your Instagram.
- 2 Posting Quality Content.** Contrary to popular belief, posting anything isn't always the best method. It's better to post some quality content rather than post a less than perfect image just to make sure you're posting. If it comes down to skipping a post or posting a blurry selfie? Skip it and be more prepared next time!
- 3 Engaging with Everyone.** Okay, maybe not everyone. If someone's trying to slide in your direct messages with a 1990s pick-up line, you can ignore that, but if someone has a question or even just saying hello, you need to reply. Likewise, you need to like their comments and their posts, especially if they're reposting something of yours.

Keeping these three ingredients in mind, there are so many things to do to get your name out there. It's not just engaging with your followers, but you also need to find new followers and new friends at the same time. Instagram users are looking for a genuine, active person to follow and engage with, and the more you use the platform for making friends, the faster your profile and following will grow. Here are some fun things to help grow your Instagram:

1

Like / Comment on photos in your niche. This is one of my favorites, especially when it comes to inspirational or motivational posts. I love browsing inspirational quotes and new organizational ideas to make my business run faster and smoother. When you comment on other people's posts, I like to comment something thoughtful. It's not enough to post "Nice post!", you should post something truly thoughtful.

2

Follow other influencers and related hashtags. It's up to you as to who you want to follow on your Instagram. You can follow all users back or only follow Instagrammers who you have an interest in. You can also now follow hashtags on Instagram, and I recommend following all the hashtags you regularly use for your business even if you don't want to follow any specific users. Following hashtags saves time when you're engaging with like-minded individuals.

3

Make actionable posts. One key to visibility is having an active page. The more people liking, commenting, and regramming your posts, the faster you'll grow. The key to this is making actionable posts. Don't be afraid to ask your followers or fans to do something. You can ask them to like your post if they understand and agree with what you're talking about. You can ask them a question in the comments, and you can even ask them to regram or share on other social media websites.

4

Geotag your photos. If you're a traveler or if you go to a lot of events, a great way to find new followers is by tagging your photos with your location. Geotagging photos is simple: when you get to the last page, suggested locations will pop up for you. Anyone searching for a specific location will see your posts once it's geotagged. If you're a brick and mortar store, Instagram geotags can take your business to the next level. As long as your business is geotagged, customers can use it for their Instagram posts.

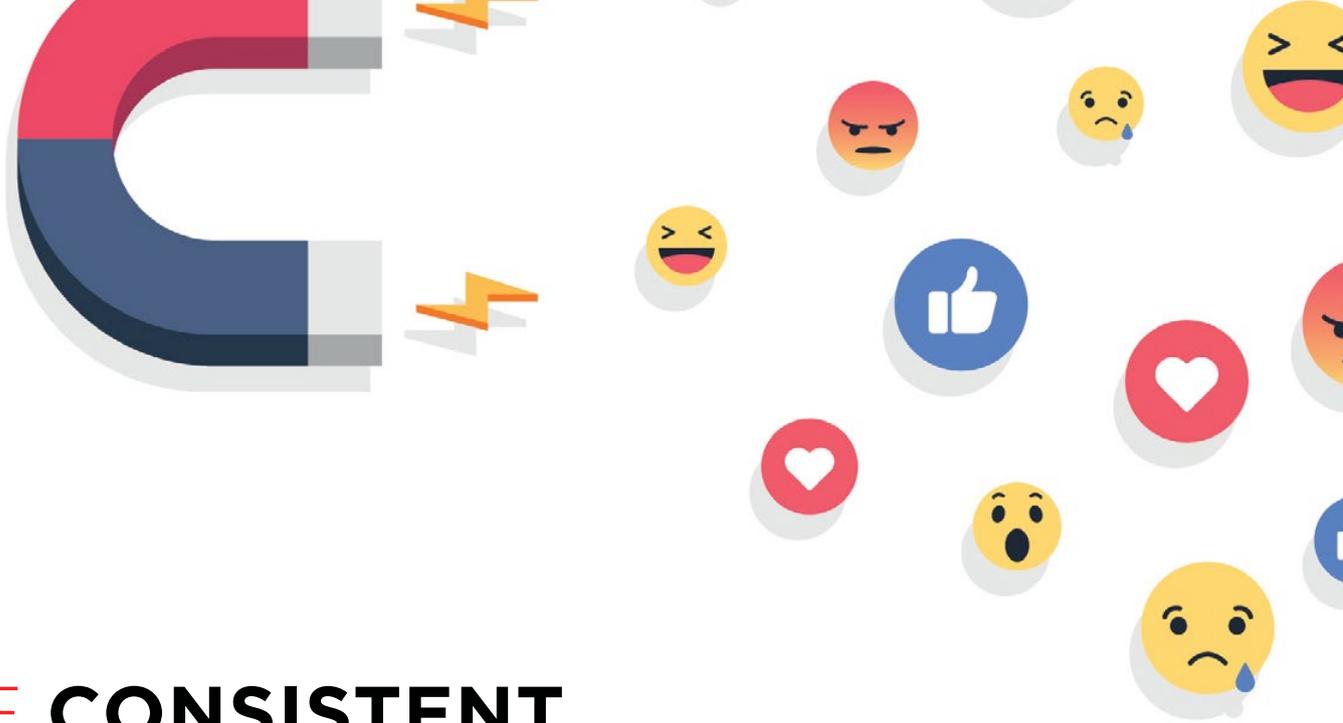
5

Create Re-grammable posts. The purpose behind posting quality content is for others to regram your posts. You can tag other influencers and curated Instagram galleries on your best-looking photos. A regrammed post can spread your unique hashtag and get hundreds of new eyeballs on your profile. Getting regrammed takes effort on your part, though. To have the best chance of a regram, study the account you want to be featured on and create posts catered to their aesthetic. If the account prefers soft, natural photos, go easy on the filters. If the account is travel and adventure themed, don't submit food posts.

6

Collaborate with other users. Instagram takeovers, shared stories. Collaborations with other users that share the same interests as you are a great way to grow two followings at the same time. Other influencers aren't your competition, they're your colleagues! Don't be afraid to reach out to them, regram their stuff, and make shared content for your followers and theirs. The more you collaborate with others, the more exposure you have. Collaborations are free and fun, but they're also an exciting and unique way to spread your reach.

Growing an active Instagram page takes time, consistency, and patience. It's not going to happen overnight. It won't even happen within a month or six months, but anything worth having is worth working for. The growth will come as long as you focus on staying having fun and being consistent.



8. BE CONSISTENT

It's no secret that Instagram favors consistency, and the more consistent you are, the more you'll get out of the platform. It can be difficult to maintain a consistent posting schedule, especially if you're not a social media person, but it's as simple as forming a new habit.

When you have a business, automation is your best friend and, while there is no website that can post to your Instagram, you can still create a consistent posting schedule on your own. You can create a spreadsheet with the photos and tags already prepared so all you have to do is paste the information into the program at the scheduled time.

CONSISTENCY ON INSTAGRAM

Consistency is more than just posting regularly. Consistency encompasses everything on Instagram to give your followers a sense of security. The more you post on Instagram, the more your fans get into a habit of seeing your Instagram content. You want them to be able to rely on your #motivationmondays or #throwbackthursdays.

Consistency also means replying to comments and direct messages and using similar hashtags to organize your posts. Both of these are not only good habits to get into, but they aid in establishing credibility which is the most important thing when it comes to your business. So, let's talk about what it means to be consistent on Instagram:



Posting regularly. Posting regularly is important, but it's not just posting three times a day, it's posting when the majority of your followers are around to see your posts. Posting regularly also means adding Instagram Stories and updating your profile links as well. The best way to figure out when you should post on your Instagram is to check your daily analytics. Not only should you figure out the best time to post, you should create a content calendar to keep yourself on schedule. You can't schedule posts on Instagram, so you will always have to manually do the post, but nothing is stopping you from getting your hashtags together, getting your post ready, and setting an alarm on your phone.

2

Replying to your followers. There are several ways to reply to your followers, so there's no excuse on this one. You should make a habit of replying to as many comments as you can, even if it's a simple "Thanks!" You don't have to reply to people who like your posts because that can get really creepy (no one likes unsolicited messages). If you find yourself getting the same question over and over again, you can always reply to your followers with a video post or through an Instagram Story. Either way you do it, you want your followers to feel heard--that's the most important thing.

3

Using similar hashtags. Over the years, it's been proven that the more contact you have with a customer, the more likely you are to turn them into a sale. In marketing, it's called the Marketing Rule of 7 meaning you need to reach the prospect at least seven times before they'll take action. Initial hashtag searches serve as your first touches, and with reliable branding and consistency, these first interactions can establish a lasting connection to your company.

The whole point of being consistent is to develop a brand that your followers quickly recognize and expect content from, and there are many ways to establish that consistency. The most important way is to be seen. There's no point in focusing on posting all the time if no one is seeing your posts.

Once you have your quality photos and your posting schedule, don't be afraid to advertise your individual posts. A small investment in the beginning will pay off like a snowball effect. Setting up an automatic advertisement on some of your most popular posts or on every new post will get your brand out there more, and with a consistent schedule, you'll keep your prospects coming back for more.





9. LINK TO YOUR OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

Do you already have a social media following? Or maybe a website and email list? If you already have those things, there's no reason to reinvent the wheel and try to find a whole new audience, you can transfer some of your current audience to your Instagram just like how you're sending your Instagram following to your website. It's all a rotation!

HOW TO SYNC YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS.

Syncing social media platforms doesn't have to be difficult or time-consuming. It's as simple as putting in links your social media platforms in Instagram settings. You can automatically sync your Instagram posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr. Sharing your posts in this way makes your social media game much easier. No need to drum up a set of completely unique Facebook and Twitter posts, too. Now, don't only repost your Instagram posts. Just like Instagram needs fresh content, all of your social media needs unique content, otherwise how are you going to convince your fans to follow you on every platform?

Out of your three Instagram posts, you should share at least one a day on Facebook and Twitter, and then remind your fans if they want more from you, they can visit your other social media platforms.

What if you're not really into Facebook and Twitter, but you have a huge email list or popular website? Did you know, you can get an Instagram viewer for your website, so visitors can see your Instagram posts? You can also share your Instagram link on your email list.

INCENTIVE TO FOLLOW ON ALL PLATFORMS?

It can be difficult to convince people to follow you on all social media platforms. Either they're not frequent users, they're the type to check but not follow, or they don't see the point. You know what the solution for that is? Give them some incentive!

If you're trying to convert some of your Facebook followers to Instagram, do an exclusive Instagram giveaway. Require they follow your Instagram page and reblog the giveaway post to be entered for a chance to win or announce winners to other giveaways on your Instagram. The bottom line is: make some information exclusive to each platform. This way, if they want to know every facet of your business, they have to follow you everywhere.



10. ENGAGE, ENGAGE, ENGAGE

Out of all the tips, this is the most important. Engage, engage, engage your following. Instagram isn't a "set it and forget it" platform. It's not a website; it's not an email list. Websites and email lists are more passive business ventures-- you don't have to spend a lot of time on them to keep them running. One or two emails a week, three or four blog posts a month (if you even keep up with a blog) and that's it. Instagram isn't that way.

If you're not on Instagram every day then you're going to get lost in the shuffle. And I get it, committing to an active Instagram can be a lot more than you bargained for, but it's important to focus on the benefits of Instagram. Let's look at some of those benefits again:

1

Over $\frac{1}{3}$ of Instagram users have used Instagram to buy something online. This is a huge number considering just how many people use Instagram daily and monthly. Here are some real numbers. There are 500 million daily Instagram users. This means 266 million of them are actively making purchases from Instagram ads and profiles. If you're running a business, you need a piece of this massive Instagram pie. 200 million Instagram users actively visit the profile of a business every day. In fact, some users are more likely to check for a business Instagram before they look for a website. It's easy to pop in a business name in Instagram, and users do it. Whatever you're selling, be it gourmet cupcakes or ways to make passive income, Instagram users are purchasers, and you need to make sure you have products for them to buy along with free valuable resources for them to utilize.

2

You can really track your stats, your Ads, and your ROI. If you're like me, then you want to see the exact results of everything you do for your business. Instagram gives you the ability to binge on your stats as much as you want. Do you want to know how many people checked your profile or followed the link in your Instagram ad? You can see it. You can track your shoppable pins and make sure you're getting a real ROI. In fact, Instagram makes exposure easy and affordable. You can boost your posts to your followers and people who fit your target audience for as little as one dollar per day-- cheaper than a cup of coffee.

3

It's simple to use and beautifully designed. Okay, I know, this isn't a conventional benefit, but it's still a benefit. App and website users hate two things: they hate knowingly being advertised to, and they hate a poor user experience. Instagram avoids both of these by keeping ads very tasteful and by constantly updating their platform. Instagram advertisements look just like regular posts, and with specific targeting, only people who are interested in similar posts will see the advertisements. Gone are the days of getting landscaping ads because you looked up the price of a lawn mower ten years ago. Not only that, but Instagram updates their app every two weeks and adds new, fun updates every single year.

4

It focuses on #Goals. I know this might sound crazy, but people like seeing where other people are. They want to see your fast car, your glamorous life, and your beach vacation. They also want to see the behind-the-scenes things that make you a real person, and Instagram is the best way to give it to your followers. As a brand or influencer, your job is partly to create a lifestyle others want to live be it through healthy food, money goals, or a jet-setting lifestyle. Your job is to entertain your followers. You gain more followers by being more entertaining. Instagram gives you the perfect platform to entertain and to show the perfect edited and filtered photograph while still live-chatting with your fans through Instagram Stories. It gives you the perfect set up for your fans to live vicariously through your success and encourage their own.

CONCLUSION

Instagram is a game changer for your business. It is one of the top social media platforms, and it has incredible user engagement. Instagram's main draw is its unique interface that focuses on being a digital photo gallery and a way to connect businesses to prospective customers. Instagram has spent nearly ten years perfecting its interface, and because of this attention to detail, it has 500 million daily users.

Instagram has recently upgraded its app to incorporate videos, Instagram Stories, IGTV, and video chat. Each one of these additions adds something unique to the user experience on Instagram. Instagram Stories and IGTV are both excellent ways to give customers a more behind-the-scenes look at your business, ask questions to your followers, and even answer questions they may have. Instagram's video chat feature allows you to host virtual meetings with clients, colleagues, or friends even while browsing the program. No need to make sure everyone's using iPhones or has Skype.

Now that you've got my ten tips for making Instagram work for your business, it's time to utilize what you've learned!

NERVOUS ABOUT GETTING STARTED?

Don't be! If you're in need of more assistance, go to www.annetapowell.com and click on the coaching tab. I don't just coach on how to make money selling real estate, my coaching is about you as a whole person! It's about your values, your career, your work-life balance, and your life purpose. I will work closely with you to design an actionable business plan (social media included) to help you reach your goals. You don't have to do any of this alone.

Just starting out and looking to diversify your income?

I have tons of resources on diversifying your income. The best way to finally make the jump from nine-to-five to working for yourself and setting your own hours is jumping into real estate. If you're new to real estate and you don't have a lot of cash lying around, my eBook [10 Ways to Invest in Real Estate With No Money in the Bank](#) is perfect for you.

If you've flipped houses before but are looking to take your business to the next level, you need my complete guide to investing in real estate. [Finding, Fixing, and Flipping Properties Study Guide Kit](#) includes everything you need to go from a novice to a prosperous real estate investor. You'll learn how to negotiate with sellers, how to avoid the most common mistakes, how to hire a good team, and how to find the perfect properties. This guide even comes with a study booklet and CDs.

If you're looking for more of me go to annetapowell.com or you can find me on all the major social media sites:



I look forward to connecting with you!