HubSpot

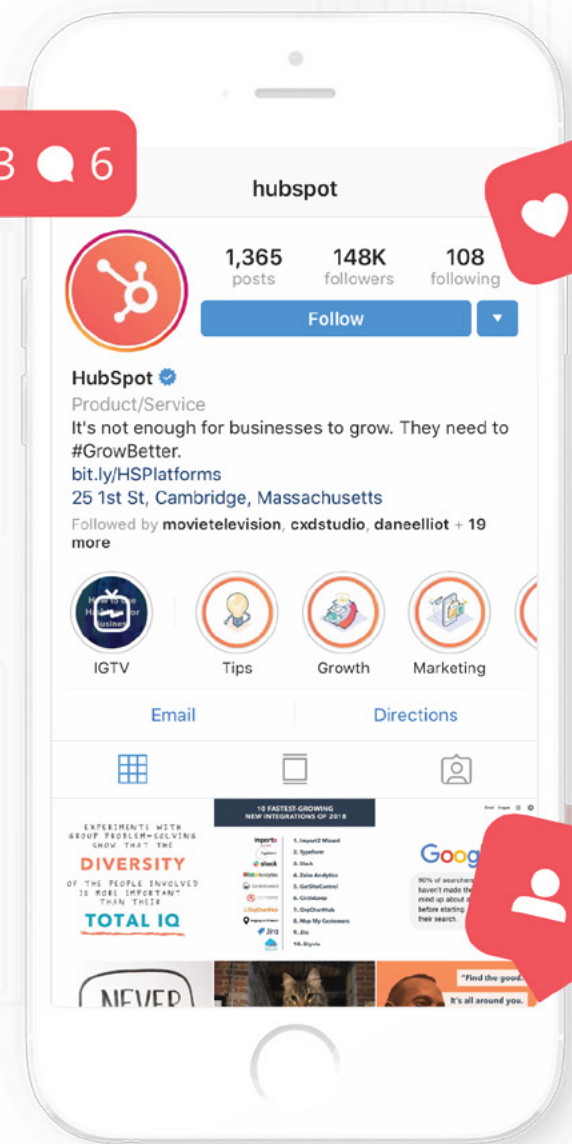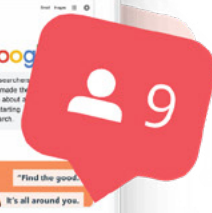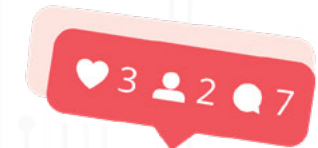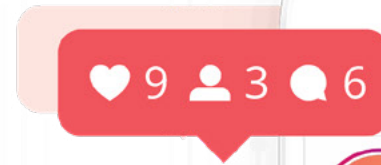# 20 INSTAGRAM HACKS

to Increase Instagram Post Engagement

Intro

Running a brand Instagram account can be challenging and this guide will help you to get your amazing content discovered by more people. Instagram, like most social media platforms, shows people the posts that do well organically, so these hacks will focus on ways that you can adjust your strategies to target the right audience at the right time in the right way. Instagram is an important brand awareness and sales tool, with 1 billion monthly active users, 60% of whom use the app on a daily basis. 80% of Instagram users follow a brand account, here's how to make sure it's your brand.

THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU

1. Get more likes on Instagram posts

2. Gain followers on Instagram

3. Discover Instagram's lesser known features

4. Leverage Instagram's native tools like Stories, Live, and more

Photo
world_record_egg

52,523,432 likes

Photo
kyliejenner

18,713,814 likes
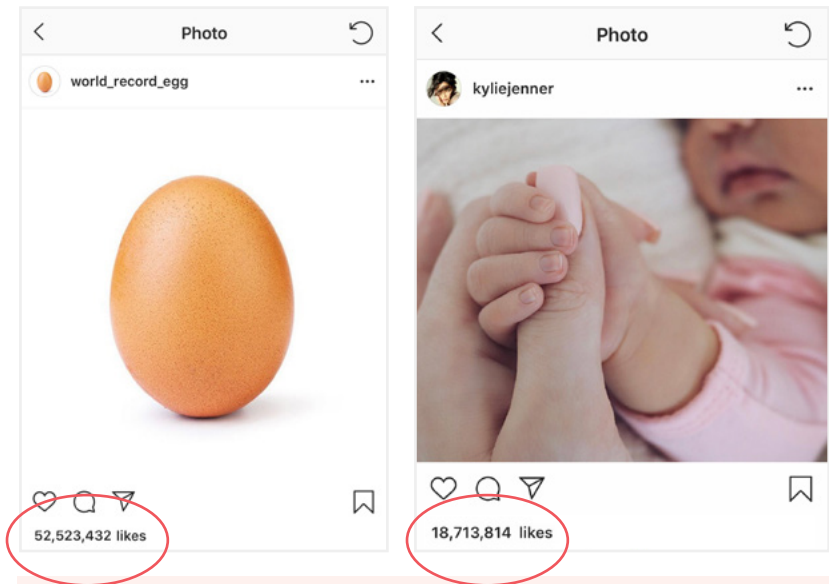
FUN FACT

The highest liked photo on Instagram is of a single brown egg. It has surpassed Kylie Jenner's previous record for most-liked photo by 32,674,791 likes since it was posted on January 4, 2019. Egg-cellent engagement if you ask us.

20 Hacks for Increasing Instagram Post Engagement

These hacks will dive into strategies and tips for you to improve engagement on your business or brand Instagram account. Before we get started, this guide is for those who are already familiar with Instagram for Business. If you are new to social media marketing or don't have a brand account yet, check out our guide to Instagram for Business. Once you've gotten your business account up and running, come back to learn how to engage your followers and improve your brand awareness.

Instagram use grew by 25% among American adults between 2016 and 2018 and it is now the third most used social platform behind Facebook and YouTube. Today, more than 500 million Instagram accounts are active daily, so how can you make your brand stand out? For starters, have a consistent, honest brand voice, and be sure to respond to your audience when they reach out. No one likes to be left hanging! Let's dive in to the 20 hacks to increase Instagram post engagement.

HubSpot

Developing an End-to-End Instagram Marketing Strategy For Your Business

Learn how to build and implement a successful organic Instagram marketing strategy.

Get Started

Add Links in Story Highlights

You can only put one link in your bio, but you can put unlimited links in your Instagram Story highlights right below your bio. If you have multiple pages you want to link out to, direct people to a dedicated story highlight vs. your bio to gain access and get them to take action.
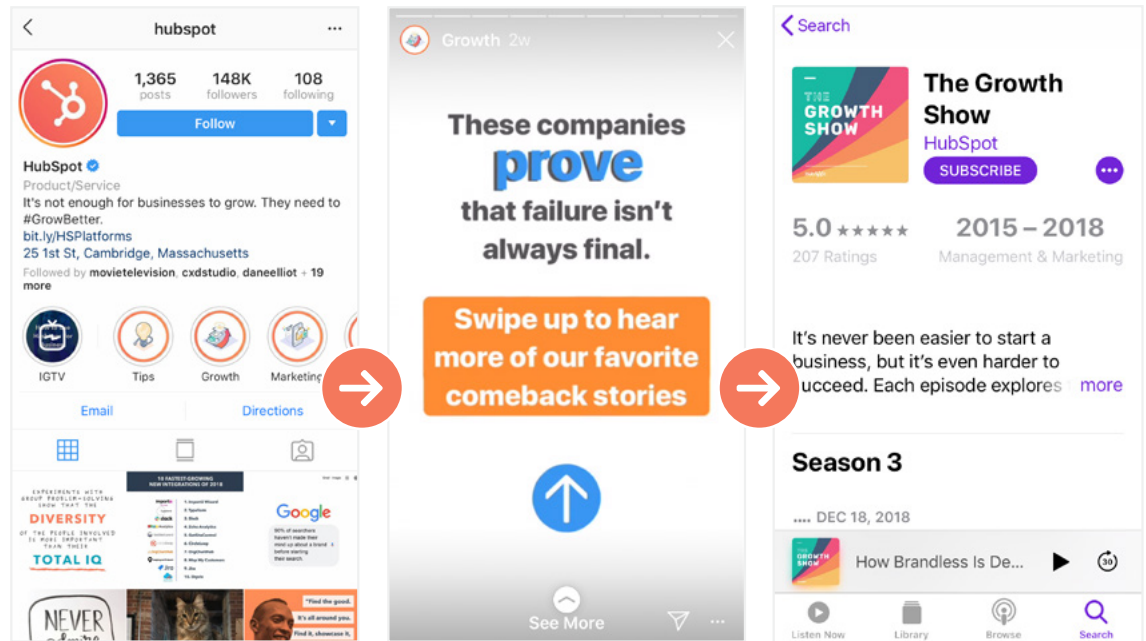
Try linking to specific pages on your website, podcast episodes, or current promotions using story highlights.

Disclaimer this feature is only available to accounts with 10,000+ followers or verified accounts. For those without access to this feature yet, here's how to use Instagram Stories to grow your brand.

Comment & Respond

Be the first to comment on influencers' photos and you'll drive traffic to your own page and posts. This concept applies for anyone with lots of followers. If your comment gets a lot of Insta-love, it'll appear for the (many) people who view that post. Speaking of comments, engage with those who comment on your posts.

As with most content algorithms, Instagram's favors organic engagement and will show your posts more **if you have comments and responses within the first hour of posting.**
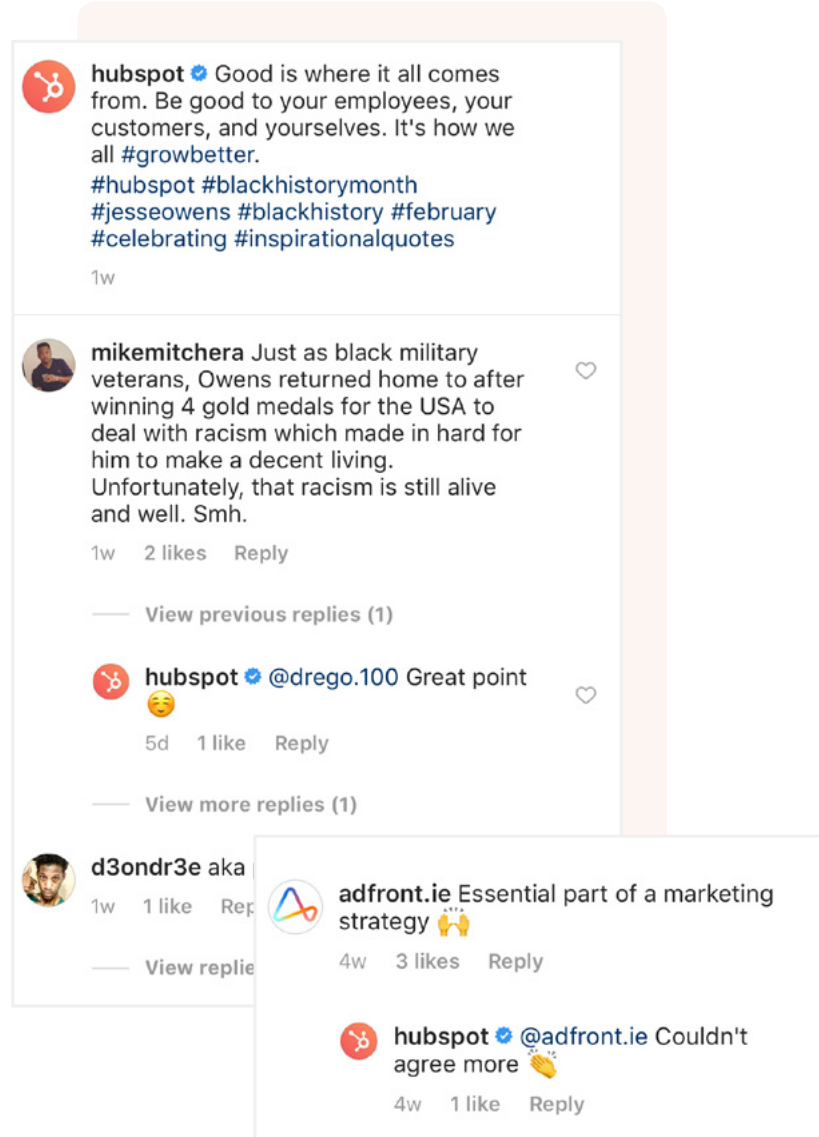
Share the Story Love

Add a story you were mentioned in to your story. When someone mentions you or your brand in their story, you can capitalize on the free mention and show your appreciation by reposting their story to your own. You'll see a notification appear when your brand is tagged in someone else's story. Just go to the notification and click "Add This to Your Story," then you can customize and add GIFs, stickers, and text to their story in your story. It's story-ception.
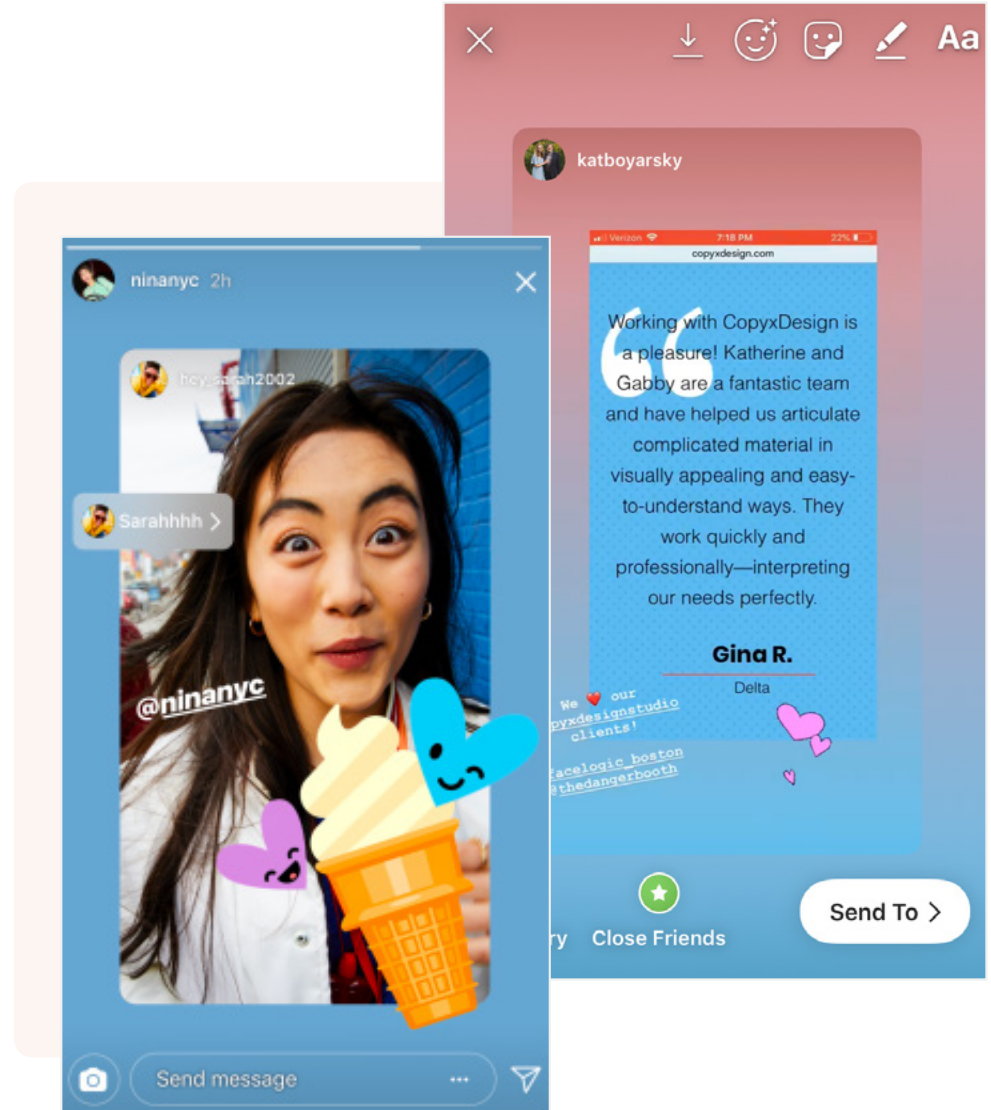
Find Your Time of Day

Test out posting at different times of the day. Each brand's audience is unique so you can start with benchmarks for Instagram use, then get even more tailored by experimenting and creating an individualized posting schedule for your followers.

You can use an app like Preview to measure your engagement and pinpoint the time that your audience is most active. Here's a guide to exploring posting times on Instagram.

The best day to post is Thursday

HINT
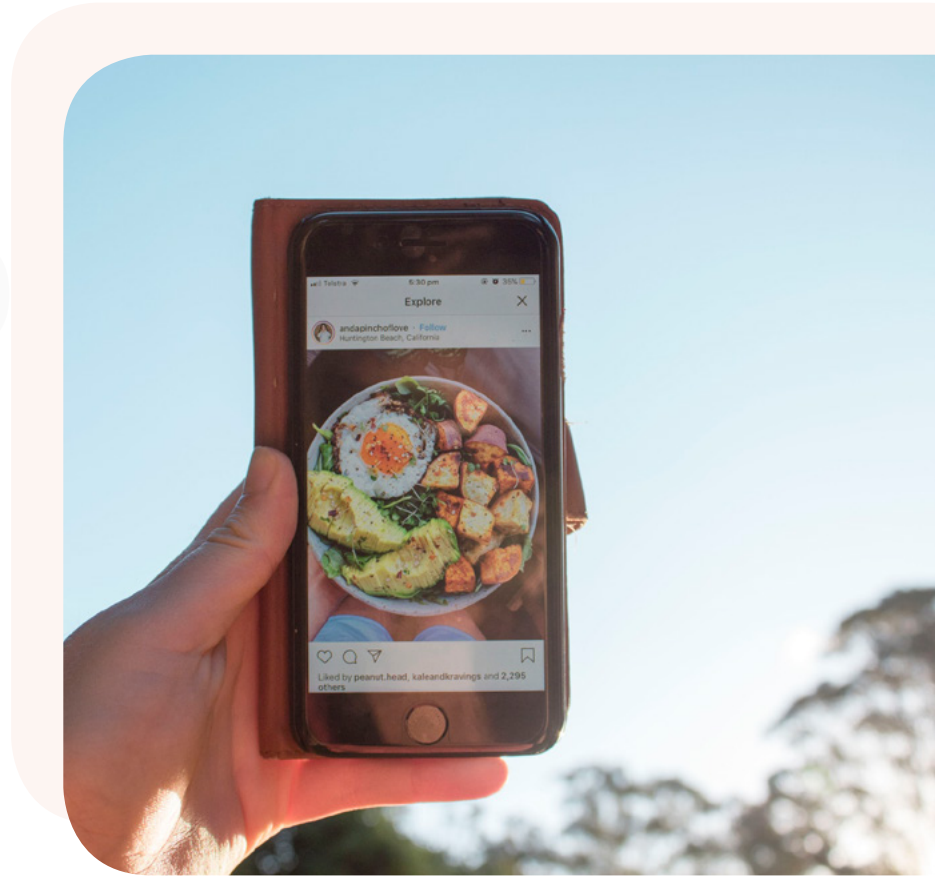
Discover New Audiences with Hashtags

Use hashtags in Stories to find new audiences. You can shrink them and make them unobtrusive while still attracting people and possibly appearing on the Explore page.

After you've tried adding hashtags in your Stories, you can analyze their reach in "Insights" and see how many people discovered your page from a given story. 70% of Instagram hashtags are branded, so don't miss out on an opportunity to get your brand out there!

Make sure to get involved in popular hashtags and jump on trending topics. Check out this 2019 Instagram hashtag holiday calendar to prep ahead of time. You can also explore the top used hashtags to leverage the most popular in your posts and Stories.

TIP

Did you know you can follow hashtags?
Just search the hashtag on Instagram and click "Follow" to keep up with top posts!
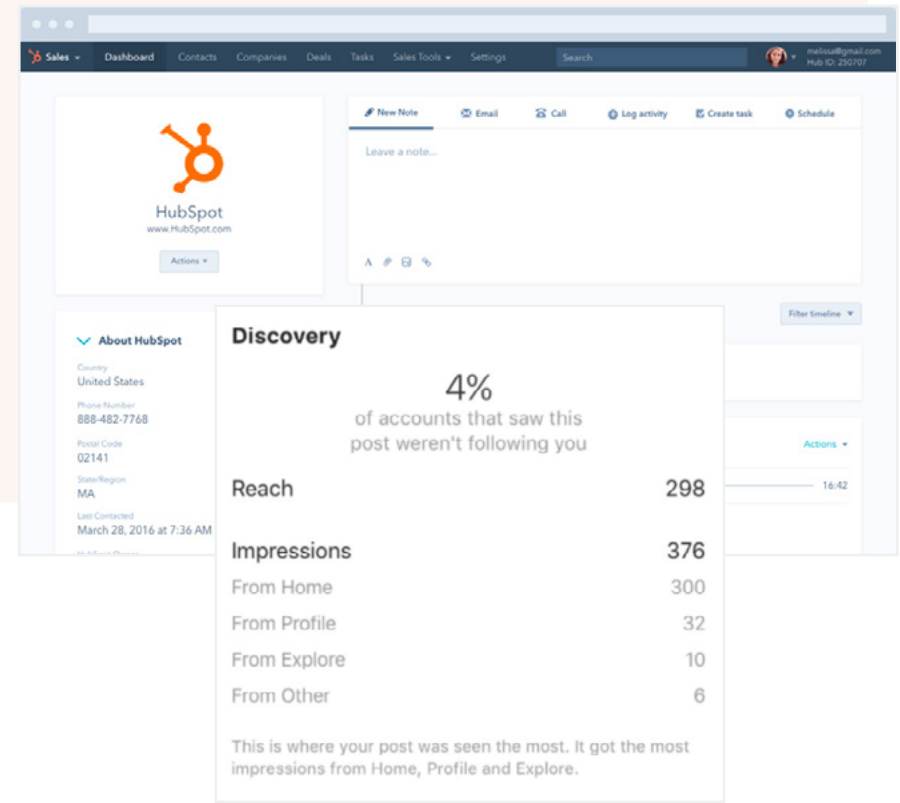
Use Stories to Promote Posts

Use Stories to let followers know when you have a new post. 400 million users watch Instagram Stories every day. With users consistently watching Instagram Stories, you have a captive audience to direct to your amazing content on your page. Try using GIFs or stickers to draw attention to your post announcements, or use the simple "Text" tool in Stories. You can publish your post directly to Stories by clicking "Share" on your post (the little paper airplane) and clicking "Add post to your story."
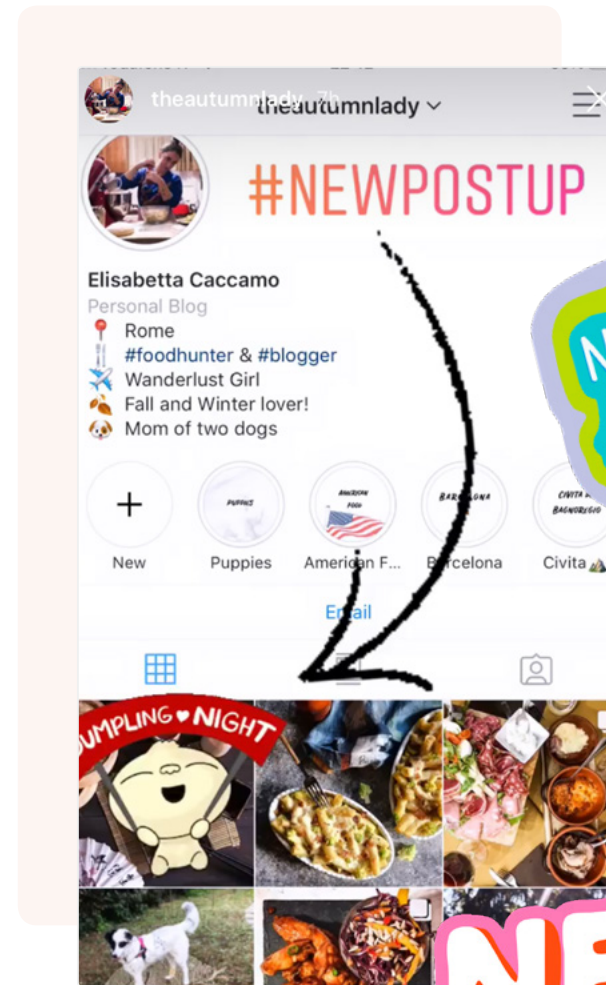
Use Your Audience!

User-generated content (UGC) sees 4.5% more engagement. Repost your users' content using a tool like Repost app. When looking for this content, search people who have tagged you in posts or used your brand as a hashtag. You can also encourage people to tag you in posts by adding "tag us in your photos" to your Instagram bio.
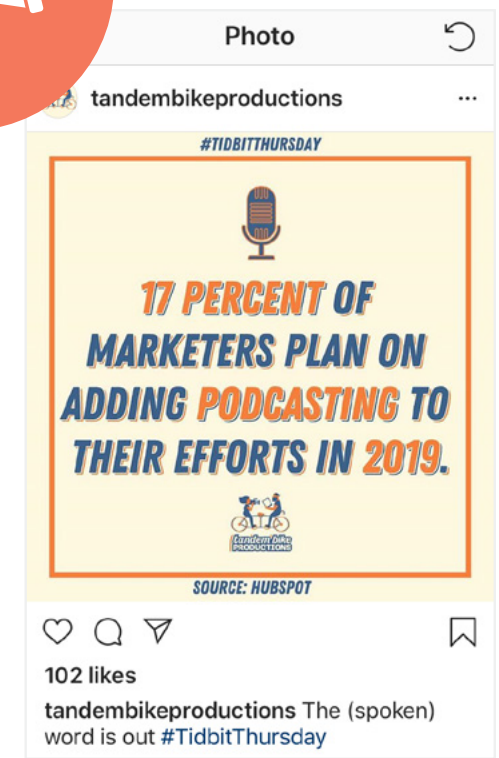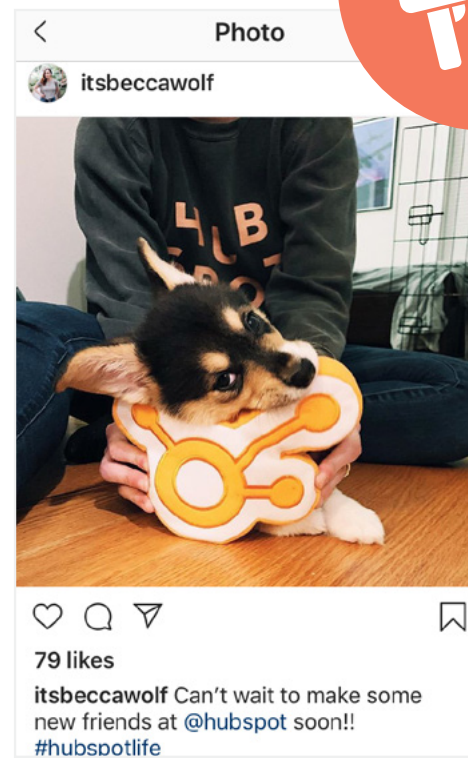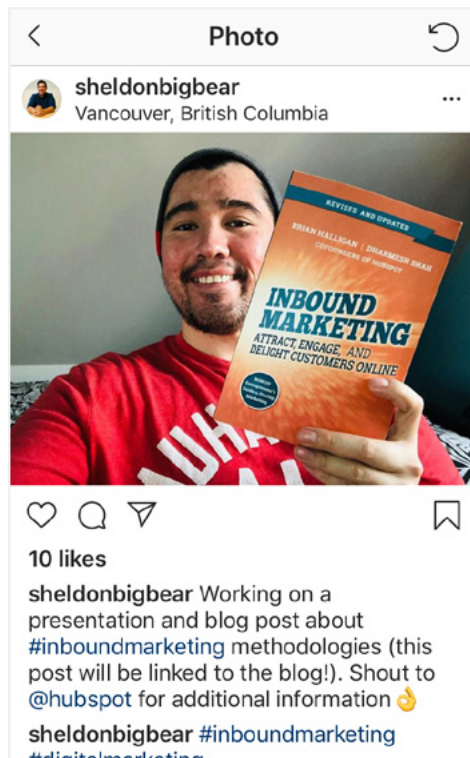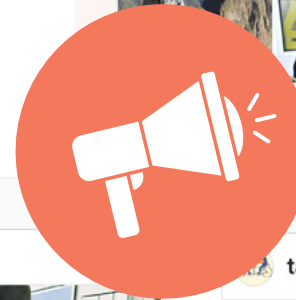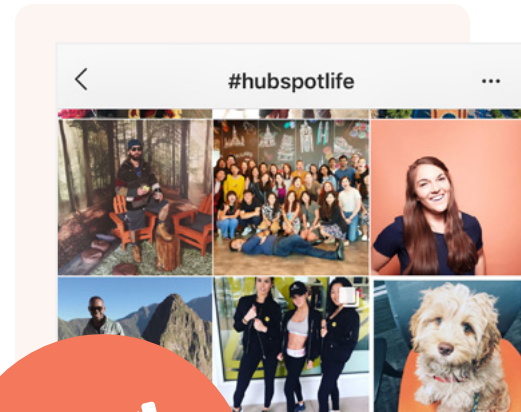
Location, Location, Location

Tag your location in photos and Stories and use local hashtags. Posts that include a location tag see 79% more engagement than those without! To find popular local hashtags, try exploring the area's local accounts like the city's tourism account to see which hashtags they use. Lots of areas have local accounts and communities for Instagrammers or "IGers" - tag them! Check out the examples from the Boston area on the right.
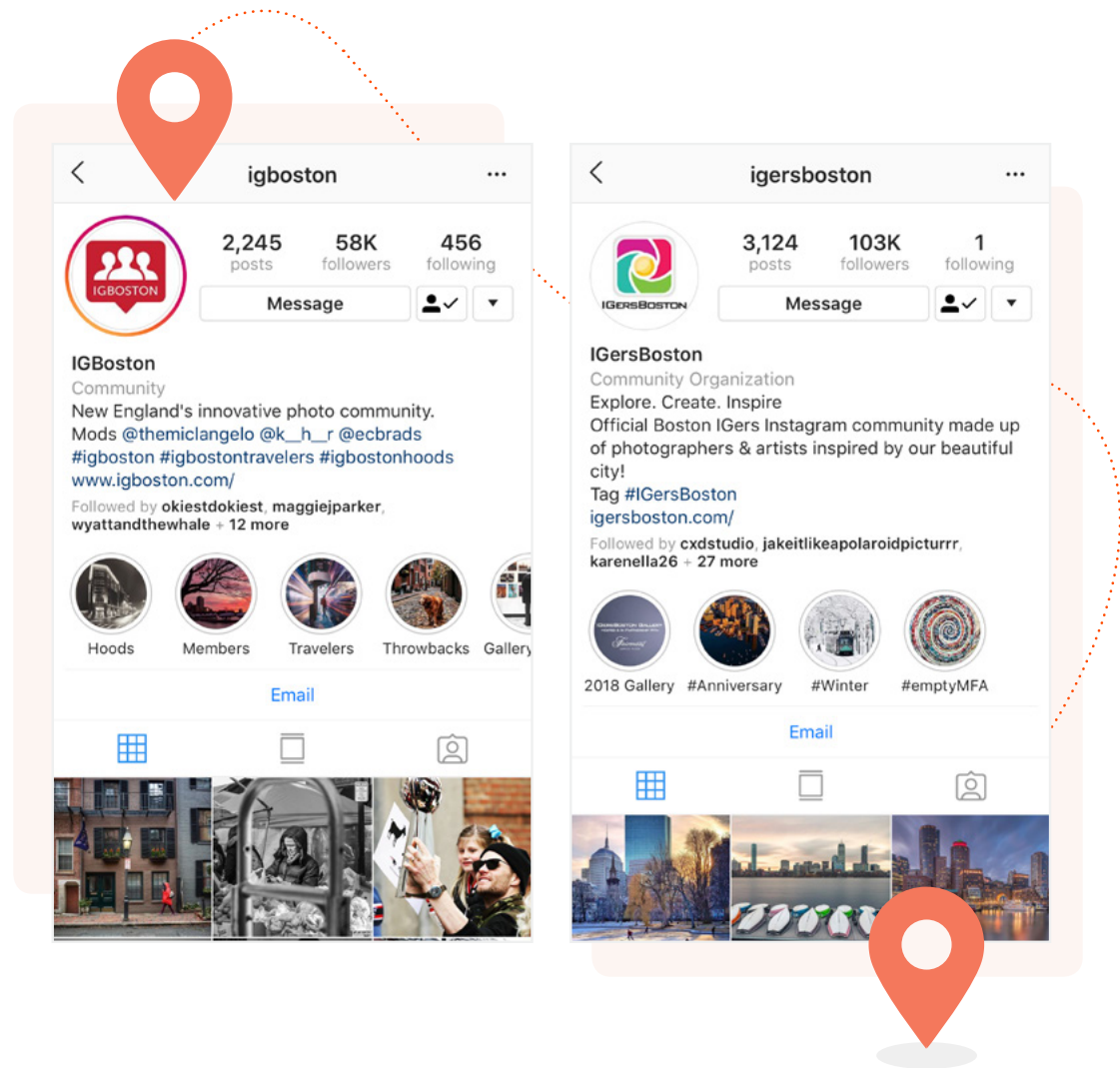
Take a Shortcut

Write pre-filled comments to quickly reply to questions. Every social media manager knows what it's like to type out the same response to common questions on your brand's account. Maybe you have a list in Notes that you copy and paste from or if you're super hacky, you've added shortcuts on your iPhone. Instagram actually added a feature so you can do this right from the app. Go to "Options," scroll down to "Business Settings" and click "Quick Replies."
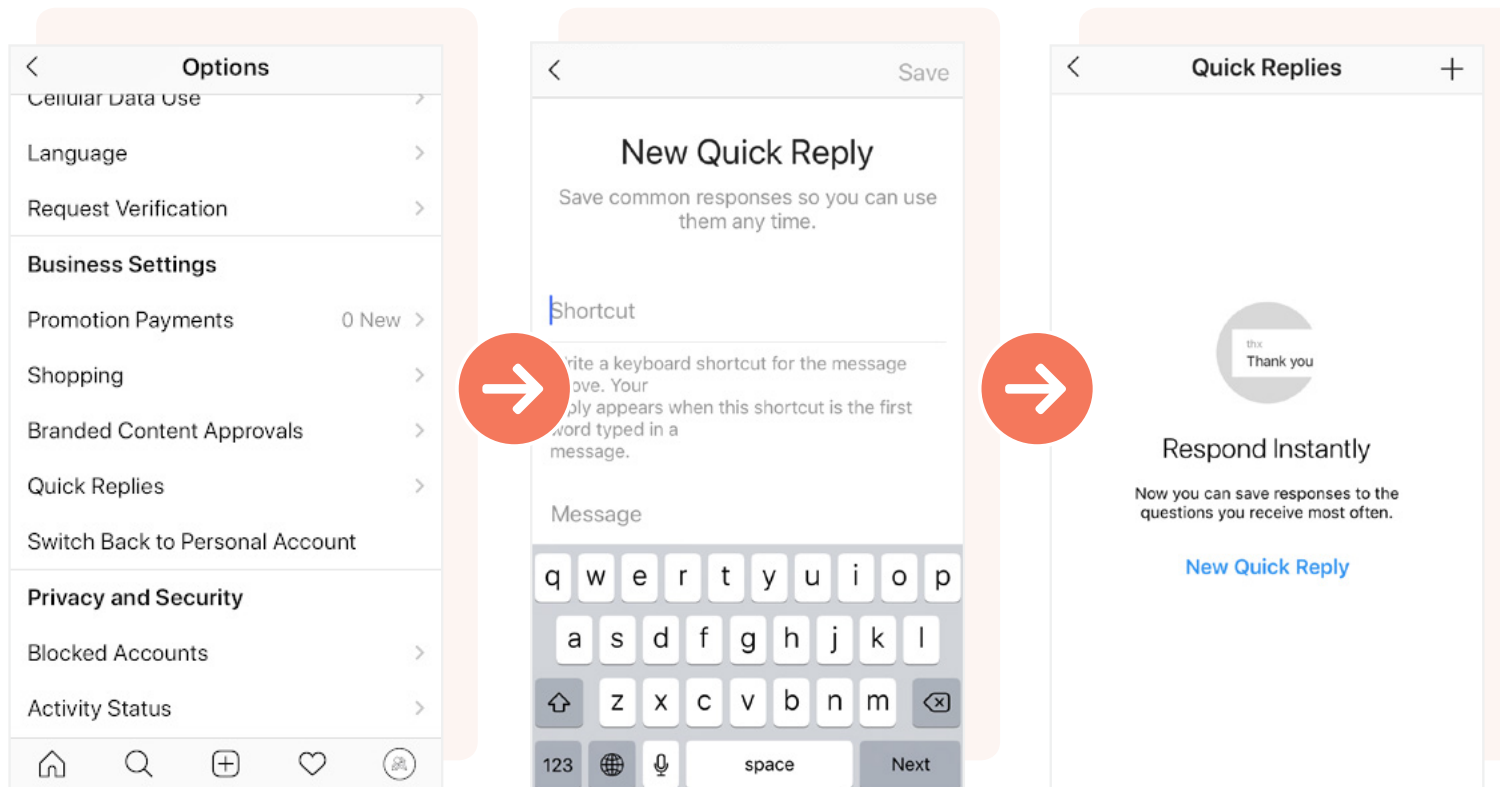
Use Your Email Signature

Put your link to your Instagram page in your email signature. The average employee sends and receives 122 emails every day, which is a lot of opportunity to showcase a relatable part of your brand. Try to get as many people at your company to include it in their email signature as well. It's a small, unobtrusive ask that could lead to more followers and ultimately customers for your company. You can use HubSpot's free email signature generator to easily include links to all your social media accounts in you and your coworkers' email signatures.
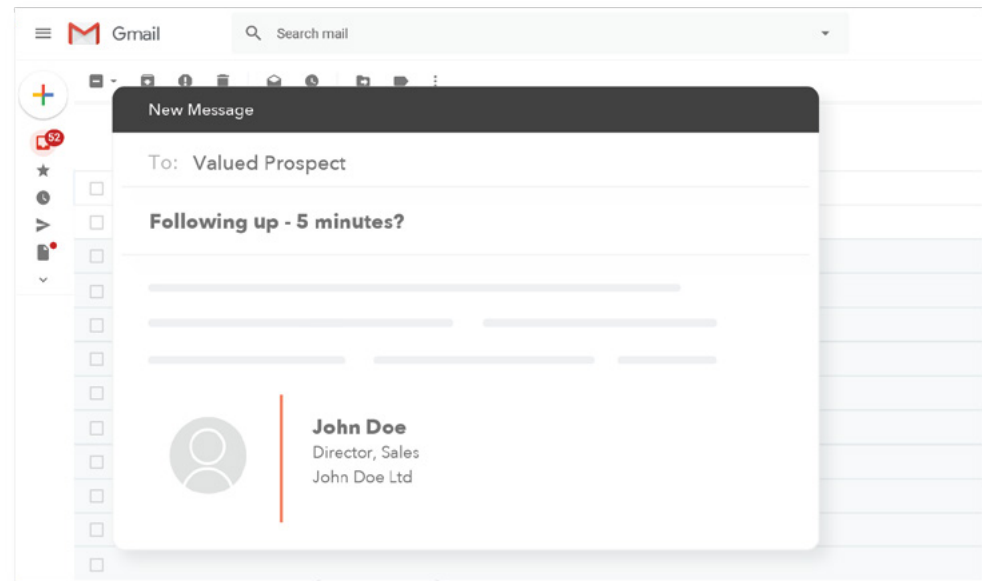
HACK #11

Include Your Instagram Feed on Your Website

Add a feed of your Instagram posts to your website using a plugin. This will showcase your latest content and attract website visitors to your social media account. For those early in the sales cycle, following your brand will keep you on their mind as they consider a decision.

To add your Instagram feed to your site, you can embed it using Instagram's native code or an app like Pixlee which is easier for those without coding experience. There are many plugins and app options if you want a different style or look and feel of your Instagram feed on your website.

FUN FACT

30% of Instagram users have made a purchase from a company they discovered first on Instagram!
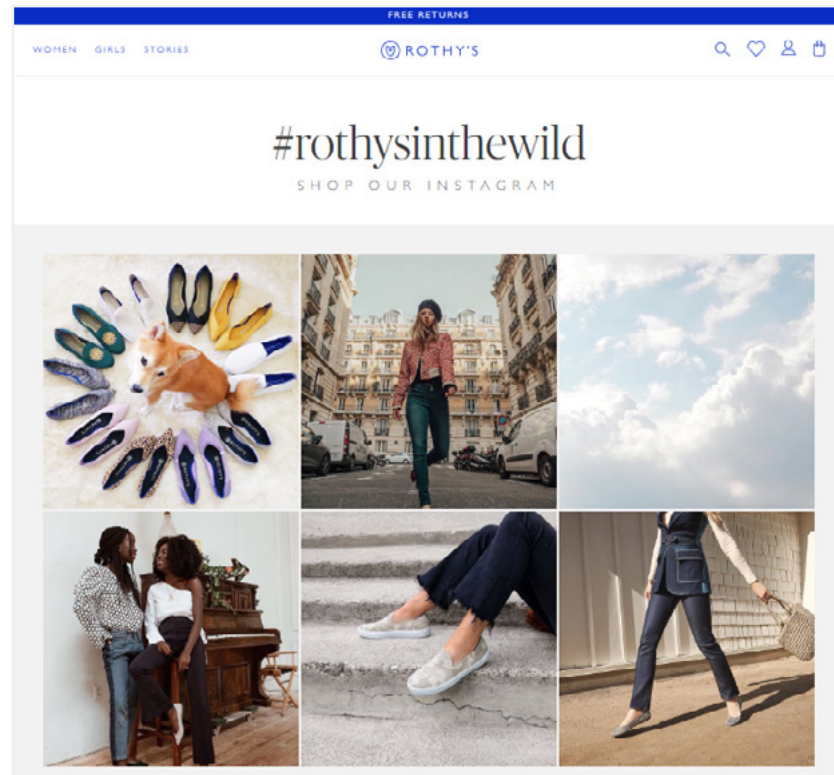
Do it Live (Instagram + Live Events)

During company events, try live posting or leveraging Stories while using the event hashtag and handle. If you're running a live event, here's a checklist for the big day:

- ✓ Create a branded hashtag for the event and encourage attendees to use it. If you run the event year over year, use the year in the hashtag (ex: #INBOUND18) so you can track the number of posts per year and see your growth.

- ✓ Leverage Instagram posts, Stories, IGTV, and Instagram Live during your event. Don't forget about Story Highlights!

- ✓ Post user generated content (UGC) during the event and let guests know they could be featured.

- ✓ If you have access to monitors or a large digital display, try running a feed of your event hashtag. Just like at large sporting events, it's fun to see your Instagram show up on the big screen and it encourages lots of posting for a chance to be featured.

Image via San Francisco State University

TIP

**Create your content ahead of time and assign someone to monitor your hashtag during the event.** Create your content ahead of time and assign someone to monitor your hashtag during the event. You will likely get a lot of real-time questions during the event and it should be someone's dedicated role to ensure that they get answered. You can also save time by prepping images and placeholders for quotes from the event using a tool like Canva or Photoshop. You'll thank yourself later!

Testing 1, 2, 3

Preview your Instagram story before you post it live. To do this, go to the camera to post a Story and click to add multiple photos. While editing, you will see all the photos you've chosen at the bottom and you can edit each photo individually. Once you're done editing, you'll see a preview of your story before you post! When you're ready to go, just add it to your Story like you normally would.

This hack is particularly useful when launching a new product or publishing an announcement that contains several (important) text slides in a row. This approach prevents you from having to create and edit images in real time -- especially if they are out of order. This is less stressful and allows you to edit while you review!
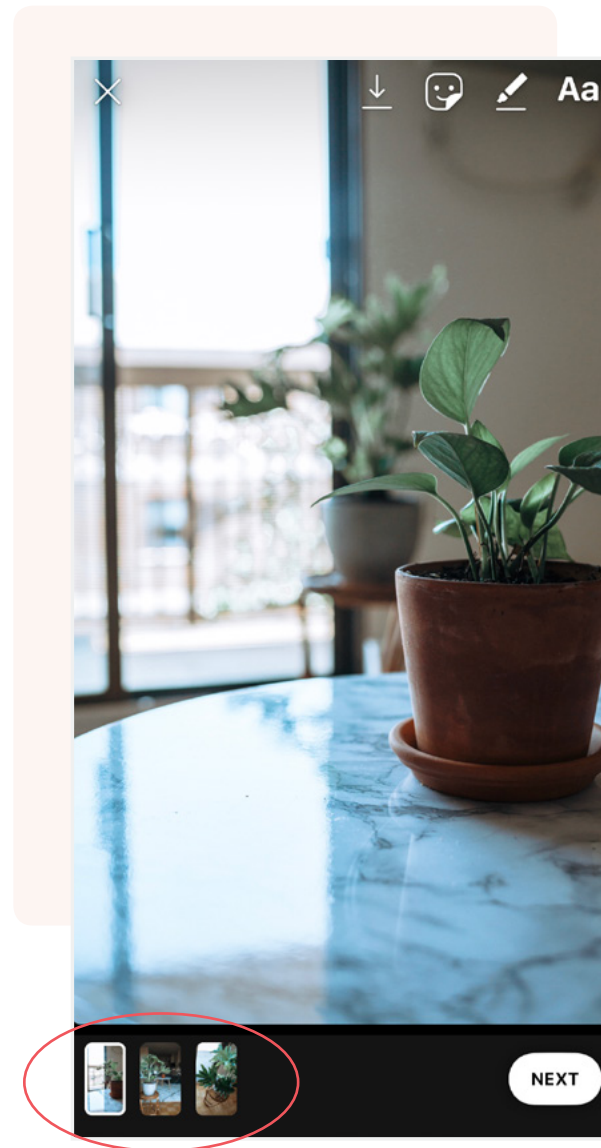
Try Takeovers/Partnership

Partner up with another brand or influencer for an Instagram takeover of each other's accounts. You will gain new followers from their audience and vice versa. You can have the other brand take over your account and post to Stories, do a Live Q&A, and post directly to your feed. **Make sure to consider the following before you do a takeover:**

How long will the takeover last?

How many posts can they/should they publish?

Any content guidelines, off-limit topics, etc?

Any hashtags or content you'd like them to discuss?

What will they get in return?

Don't forget to promote the takeover before it happens. You can get more than just one day worth of coverage from a larger brand or influencer taking over. Consider boosting a promotion post or takeover posts since you'll be monopolizing on two separate audiences and getting a bigger bang for your buck.
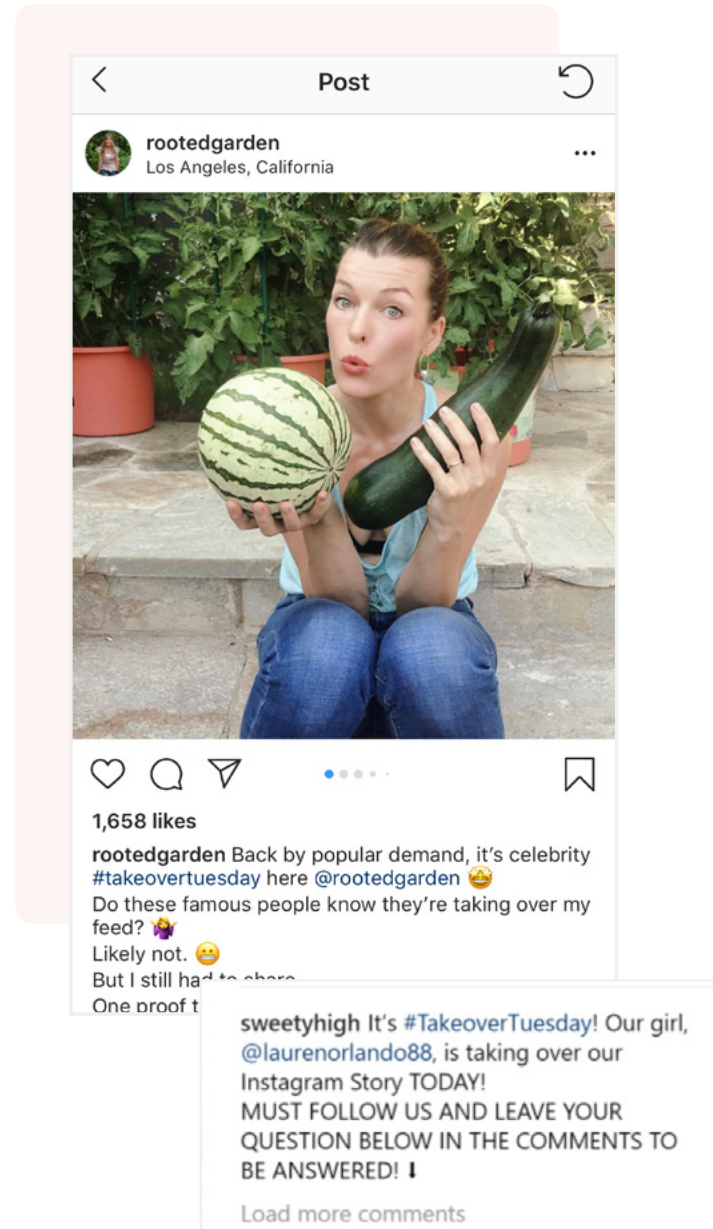
Link to IGTV

Link to IGTV from your Instagram story. IGTV is a feature released by Instagram in summer 2018 for long-form native Instagram videos that can last up to one hour. IGTV appears on your Instagram page to the left of Story Highlights. To link to your IGTV from Stories, simply choose an image or screenshot from your IGTV video and click "Link" from the top right when posting a story. Choose "IGTV video" then select the individual video you want to link to.
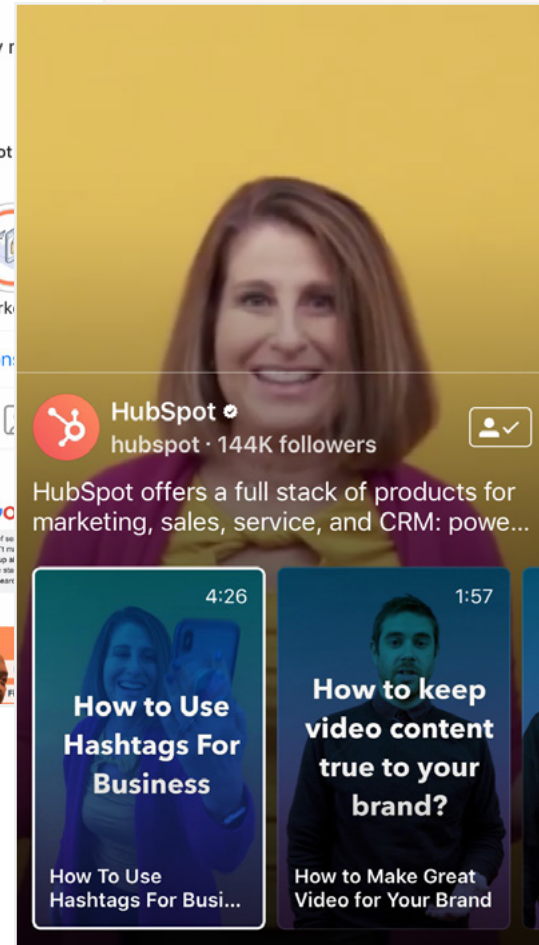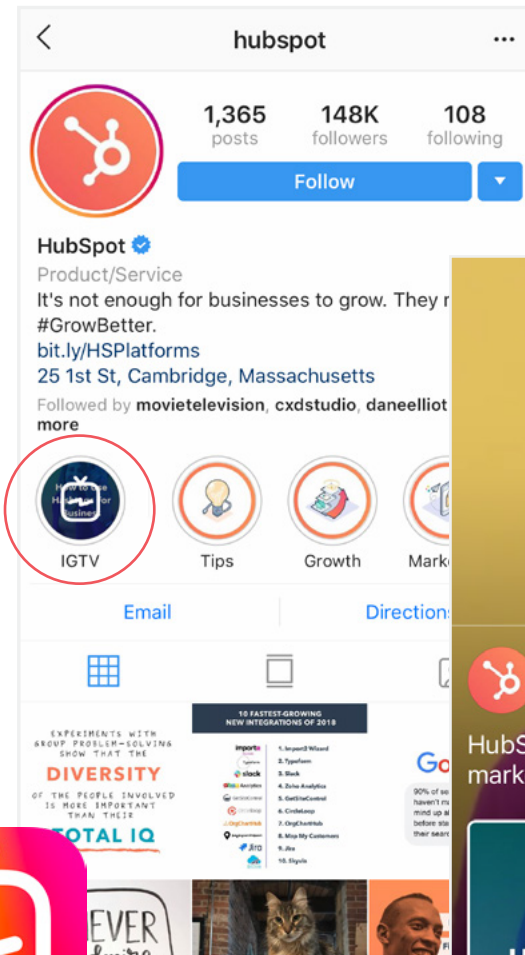
Zoom Zoom
(+ More New Features)

Use Instagram's new features in Stories like Super-Zoom, Music, Polls, Questions, and the Slide Bar. These features allow you to better engage directly with your audience and have fun with Stories. Use Questions and Polls to ask your audience what they want more of, answer questions Q&A style, and to get to know your team. Here's a breakdown of all the new features and how to use them.

HACK #17

GIF or JIF?

No matter your pronunciation preference, GIFs perform well on social media. They're easy to make, fun, and relatable. You can post a GIF to your Instagram feed or in Stories by creating a GIPHY using its mobile app and sharing the GIF directly to Instagram using the "Share" feature. Here's a step-by-step guide to posting GIFs directly to Instagram.
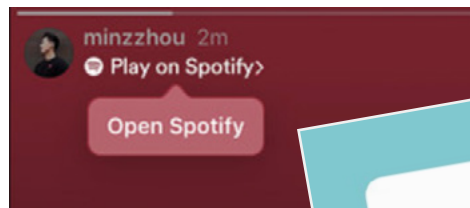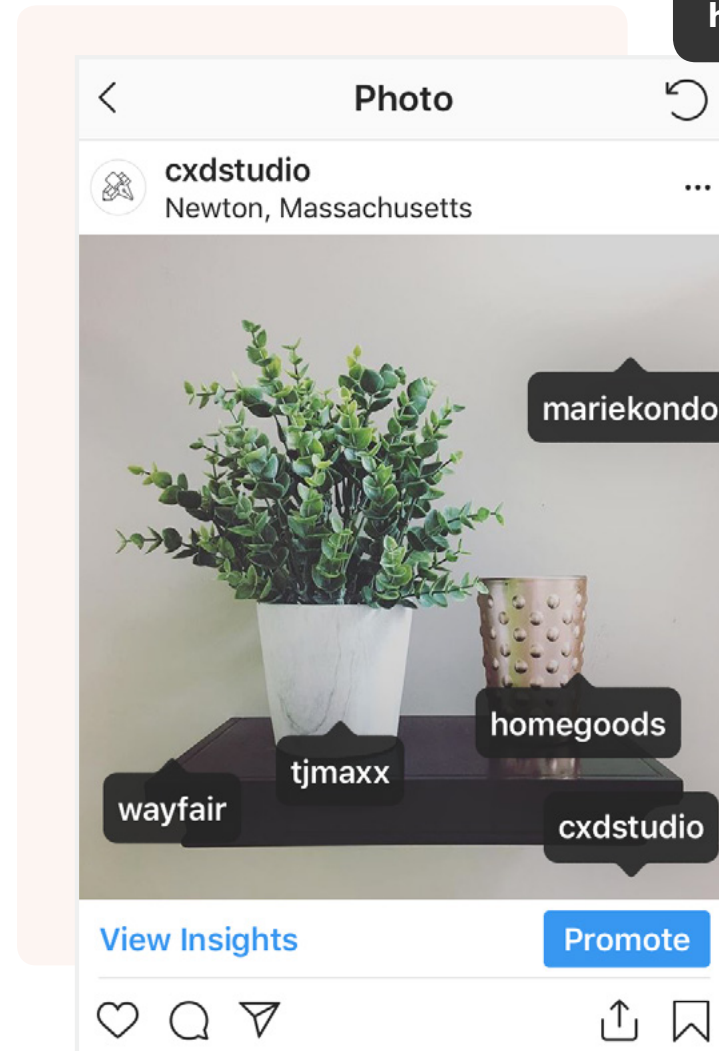
Tag, You're It

Tag influencers and accounts with a lot of followers when you mention them in posts. Getting picked up by an account with a large network will quickly boost your engagement and following. Just like you want your followers to post about you, influencers and celebrities love seeing fan posts and tagged photos. You're driving your audience to their page by tagging them, so the relationship is beneficial to both of you. Try to tag brands or products whose audience overlaps with your audience. This will make the influencer or related brand more likely to want to collaborate with you.

If they follow you back, try to establish a connection via direct message asking to collaborate. Try an Instagram takeover (see hack #14.)

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Newton, Massachusetts

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homegoods

tjmaxx

wayfair

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Make Your Content Accessible

Did you know that Instagram has a feature to create alternative text descriptions for users with visual impairments who use readers or accessibility features on their device? Add alternative text, or a description of the image or video presented, for your audience members who use accessible devices. This will read the description aloud, allowing them to have a better experience with your brand!

When creating new posts, click "Advanced Settings" then under Accessibility, choose "Write Alt Text" to add a short description of the image or video.
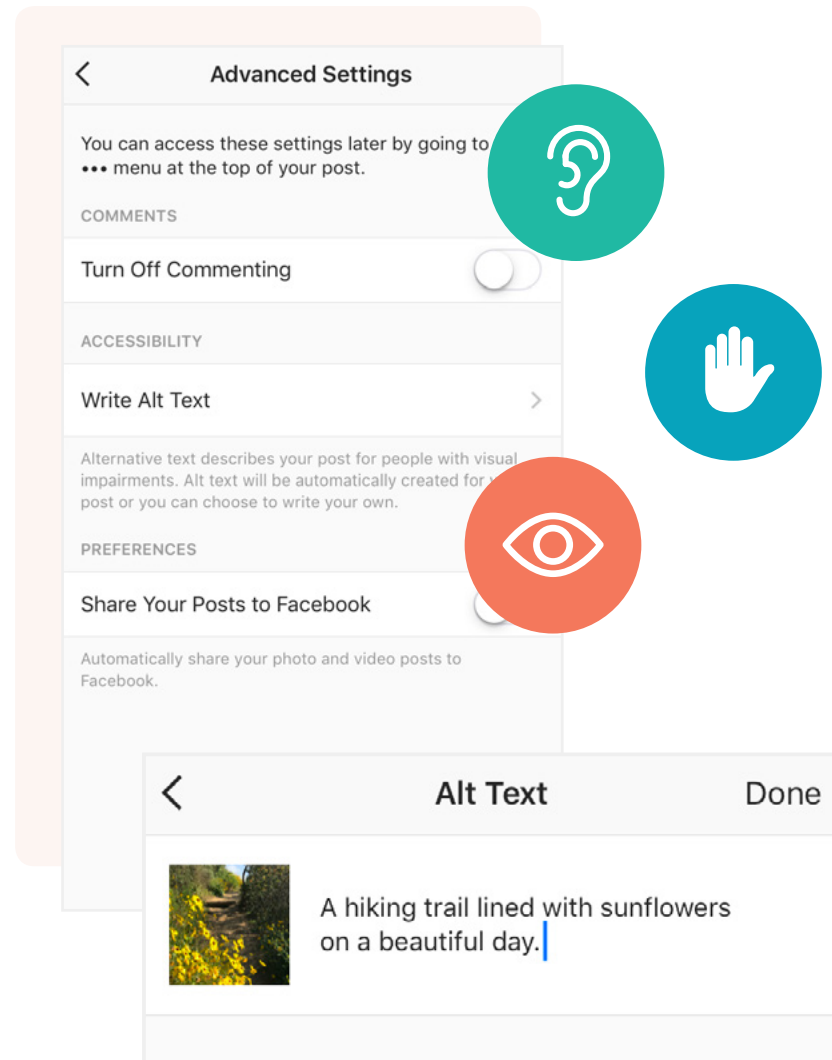
Shop Till You Drop (on Instagram)

Make your Instagram a store. Instagram now allows brands to create shoppable images right in their timelines. Go to "Settings" then scroll down to "Business Settings" and click "Shopping." From there, you can set your brand up as a store and create clickable images for your users to shop right from your page.

29% of millennials use social media to purchase items, so getting in touch with this market will be powerful for your brand.

You can also include Shopping details if you post shoppable products in Stories, just add a "Click for Details" button to the item you're posting about.
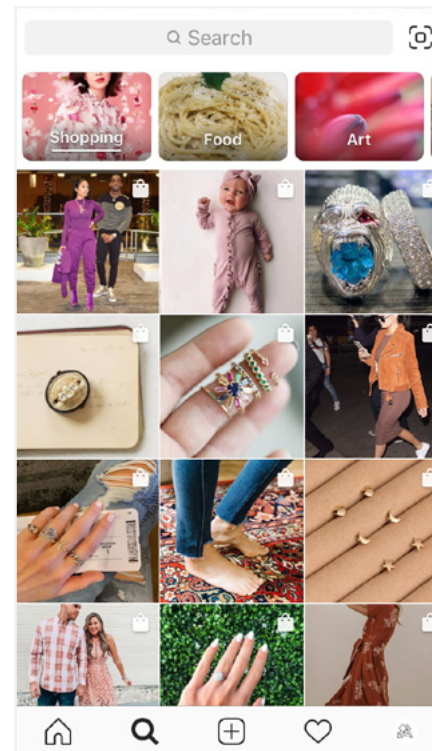
FUN FACT

Your brand's products could be featured on the Explore page. If they are featured, they'll have a little shopping bag in the top right corner to let users know that this item is for purchase directly from Instagram.

Conclusion

Instagram is one of the most important platforms in a marketer or social media manager's arsenal. The millennial market share is skyrocketing, with an estimated spending power of $200 billion for this generation. These hacks will help you improve engagement and conversion from Instagram while growing a loyal, dedicated follower base.

Engagement is the key to first purchases, follow up purchases, and brand loyalty, so create a social profile that reflects your company's mission. These simple hacks and tips will help more folks discover all of the wonderful things your company has to offer.
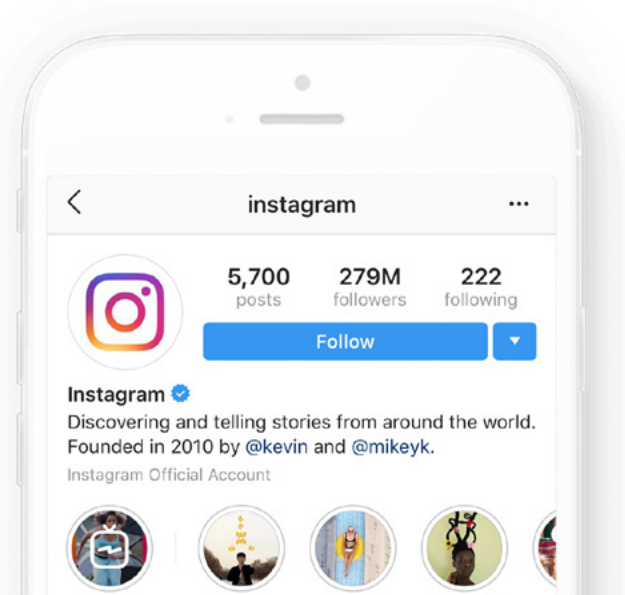
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Learn how to build and implement a successful organic Instagram marketing strategy.

Get Started

instagram

| 5,700 posts | 279M followers | 222 following |

Follow

Instagram ✓
Discovering and telling stories from around the world.
Founded in 2010 by @kevin and @mikeyk.
Instagram Official Account