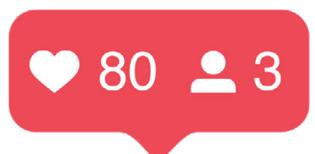
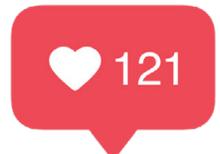
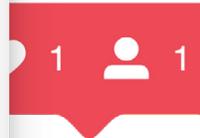
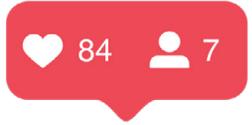
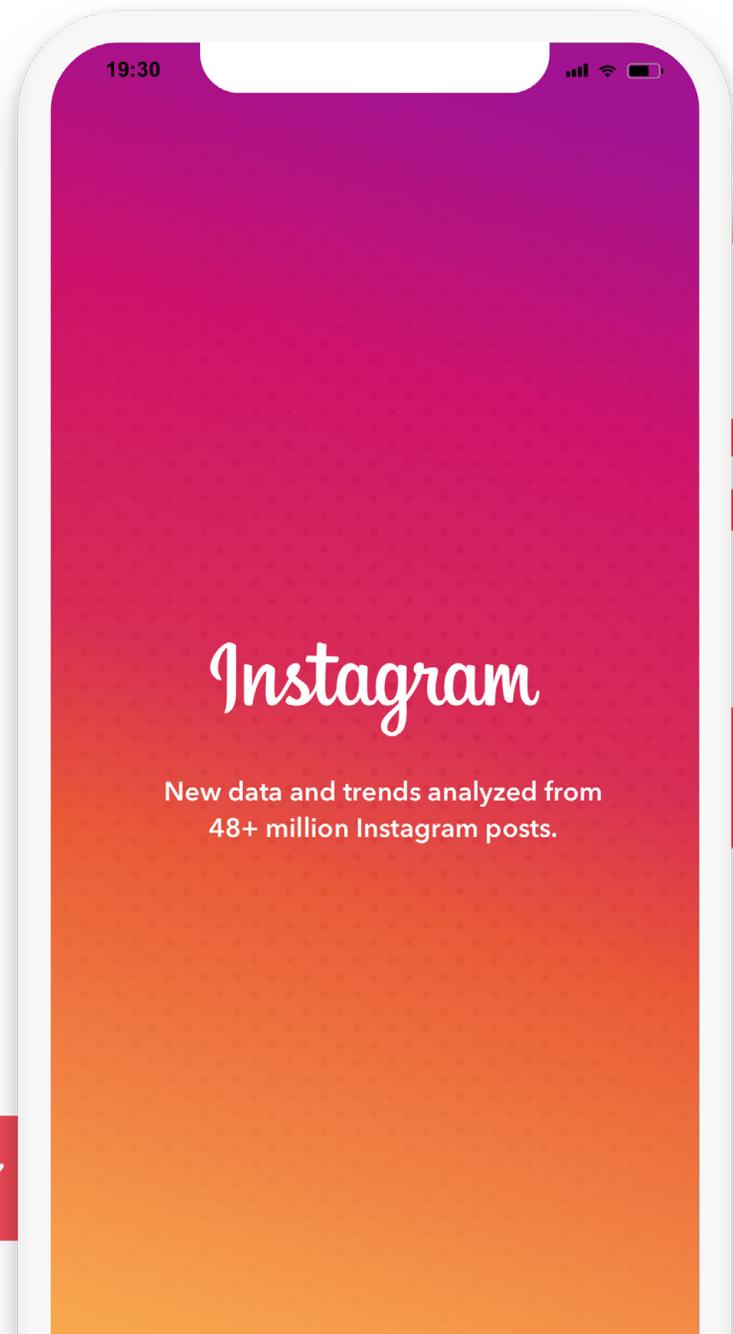




## INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT REPORT

# What Your Company Needs to Know for 2019



# Contents

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At a Glance



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More Stats



## Instagram at a Glance

Instagram is a force to be reckoned with. Since it debuted back in 2010, the platform has steadily grown into one of the biggest social networks ever. It reached 1 billion active monthly users in 2018, becoming more popular than social media giants such as Twitter and LinkedIn ([TechCrunch](#)).

Instagram's impressive growth rate has now surpassed those of its once biggest rival - Snapchat - and its parent company, Facebook.

The platform owes its speedy expansion to its **visual appeal, consistent emphasis on user experience, and continuously getting new features right**. Getting acquired by Facebook helped increase its user size exponentially.

The social network also beefed up its e-commerce and conversion abilities, making it easier for companies to show ROI on their efforts. Businesses now simply can't afford to not be on Instagram.

**Whether you're a fashion brand or a tech company, the platform can help you grow awareness, target the right audience, and convert visual content into sales.**

As more and more companies are trying to grow their presence on Instagram, it's becoming noisy and competitive. In order to stand out, **marketers and Instagram users need to know what works and what doesn't**. To do this, they need data to help them make better decisions about their strategy.

With this report, we set out to provide our readers with the most current Instagram trends and insights, thanks to our database and online monitoring capacity.



## Methodology

We've collected a massive amount of social media data for this report. Analyzing **48,065,694** Instagram posts and **306,278** of the top users we observed trends about engagement rates, hashtags, and other insights that matter to both brands and marketers.

## Report Highlights

 **2x**

Video posts receive more than 2x more comments than other types of posts.

 **5**

Tagging more than 5 users in a post does not increase engagement rates.

 **1.01**

The average Instagram post contains 1.014402684 hashtags.

 **1000**

46.6% of Instagram users have less than 1000 followers.



More than **80%** of  
businesses consider  
engagement the most  
important metric

## Instagram Engagement Rate

If you spent a lot of effort attracting millions of Instagram followers, only to have a few of them interact with your content - you may not be attracting the right audience.

There are two reasons why engagement is one of the most important and telling metrics for Instagram. It allows you to know if you're reaching the right audience with your brand, and if your content is relevant to them.

For many marketers, engagement is the golden KPI of brand awareness. In fact, [more than 80% of businesses consider it the most important metric](#). This is why increasing the overall engagement has become the number one goal for most brands. **But what does it mean, exactly?**



## WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT?

Simply put, engagement is the number of interactions a user has with your content. This usually comes in the form of likes and comments. However, as Instagram has evolved and launched new products such as Stories and IGTV, engagement now can also mean the number of views, shares, and direct messages.

[There is no universal way to measure engagement](#), as different things can matter for different brands. According to Taylor Loren, Head of Marketing at Later:

**“What matters most is that your customers and followers are **engaging** with your business on Instagram.”**

TAYLOR LOREN, HEAD OF MARKETING AT LATER

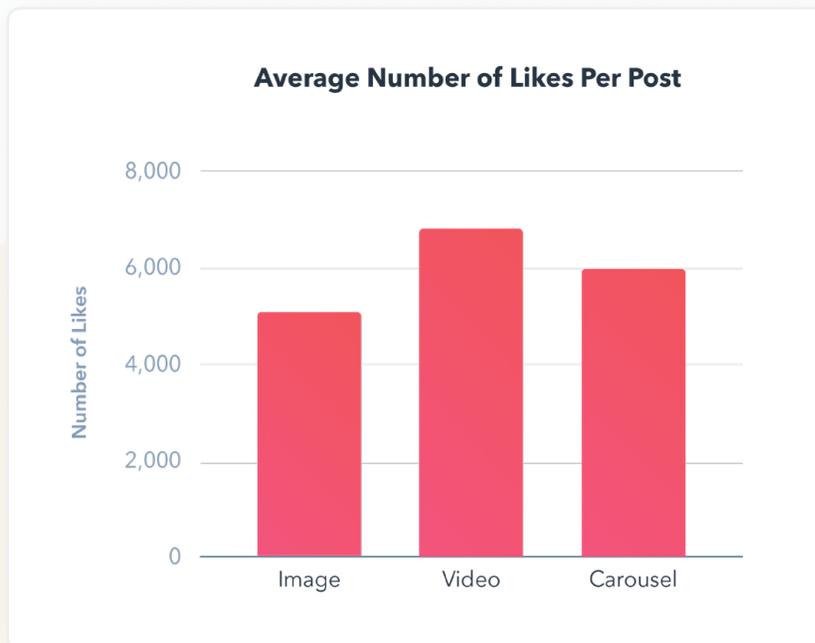
Whether its video views, likes, or something else—focus on measuring the engagement of the elements that are important for you. For simplicity’s sake, we will stick with measuring the number of likes and comments in this report. Let’s dive in to look at the most common types of engagement.



## LIKES ON INSTAGRAM BY POST TYPE

From our analysis of more than 48 million posts, we observed that the average Instagram post receives many, many likes: 5,963.1 to be exact. This takes into account the posts of highly influential users, which skews the average.

However, looking at the median number of likes, it's closer to 100, which suggests **50% of users receive less than 100 likes for the average post.**

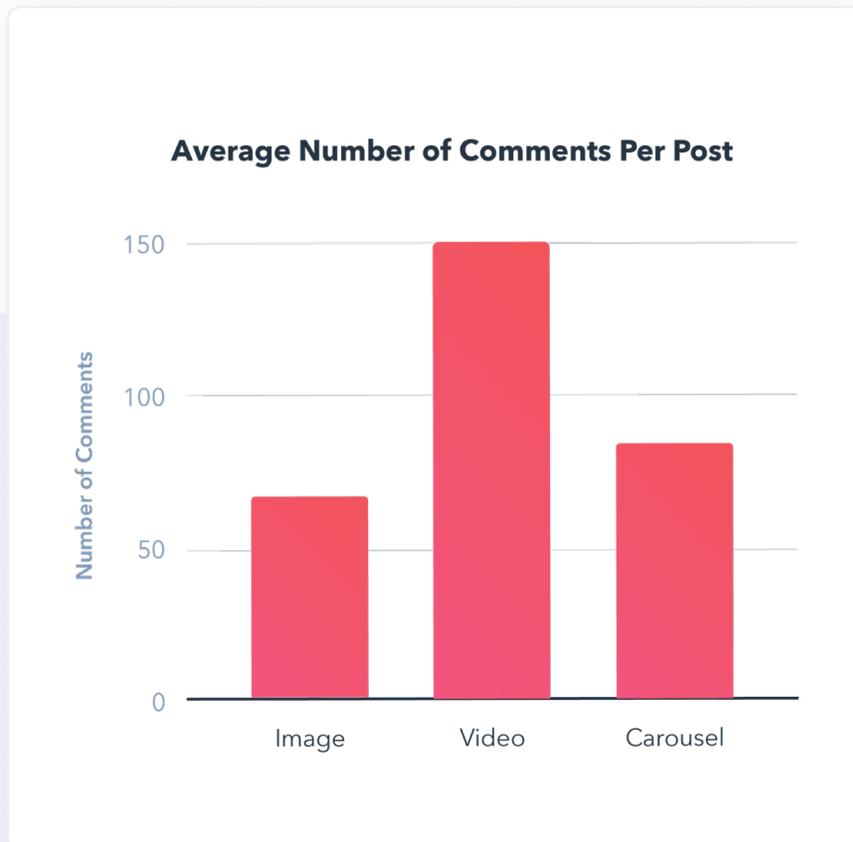


**Video posts received on average the highest number of likes.** This was expected as video content usually gets higher engagement on most social networks. What's interesting is that compared to [our report from 2018](#), the median number of likes for video beat out the two other types of content. This suggests that video content has increased in overall engagement in the last year.



## COMMENTS ON INSTAGRAM BY POST TYPE

Taking into account posts of highly influential users - the average Instagram post receives 100.34 comments. If video posts received more likes on average than image or carousel, do we then see the same pattern for comments?



Indeed, **video posts received a substantially higher number of comments than other post types**—on average, more than double that of static image posts.

The average number of comments per post for a video is 150. This is quite high as the number is skewed by the average number of comments that viral videos receive.

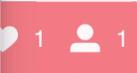
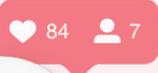
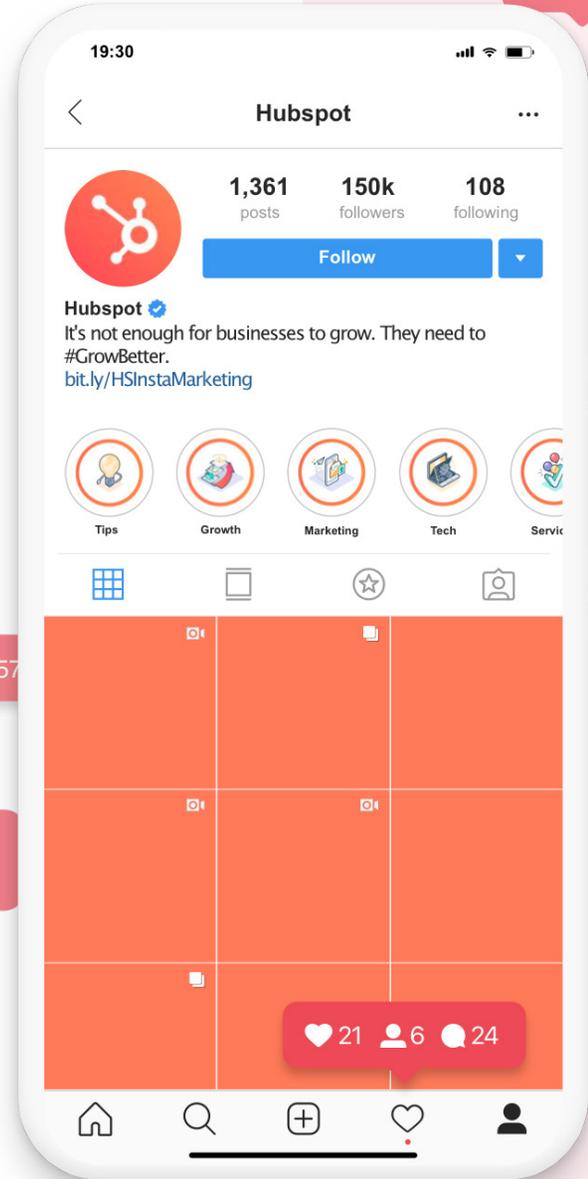
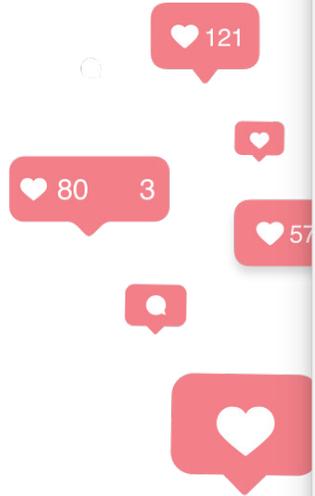
If we look at the median number for comments per video, it's 4, which means that more than **50% of total users receive less than 4 comments per video post.**



### KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

If increasing your Instagram engagement rate is what you're after, **you'll definitely want to focus on posting more video content.** This means creating more permanent videos, Instagram Stories, and leveraging the Highlights section of your profile. However, don't just post videos for the sake of posting them.

If you find it hard to create video content every day, you'll still get a healthy overall engagement rate by posting a balance of image, carousel, and video content regularly.





### What are hashtags?

Hashtags are keywords that people would use to search for specific posts.

## Hashtags

To #hashtag or not to hashtag? That is the question.

Hashtags are typically added in the caption or comments of a post as a way to group different topics of content. Simply put, they are keywords that people would use to search for specific posts. On the other hand, it also adds context to a post.

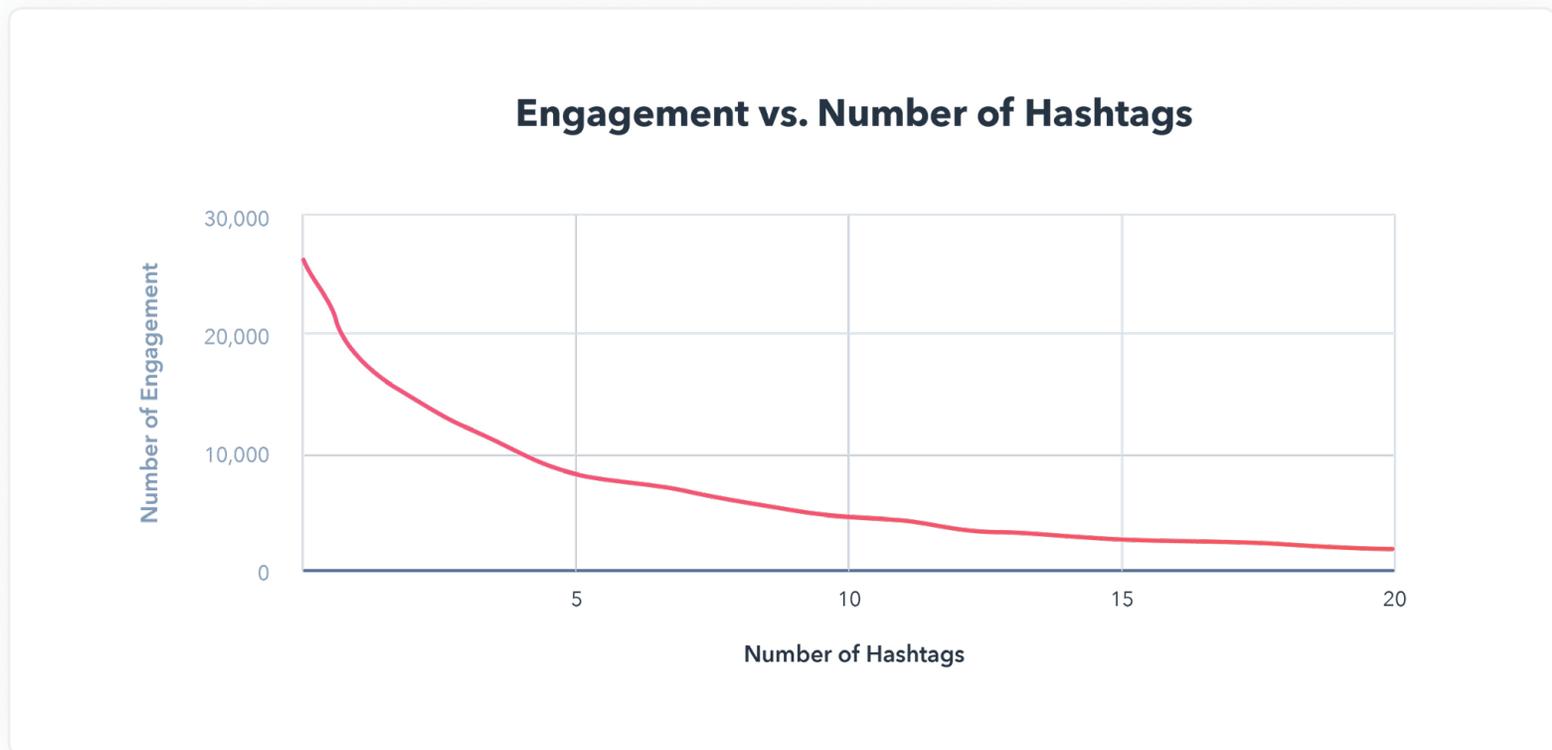
**Using hashtags can be an effective way to expose your content to new audiences that care about a niche.** For example, if you want people who are interested in healthy eating to find your post, you could add the hashtag #cleaneating to your post.



## DOES USING HASHTAGS INCREASE ENGAGEMENT?

Hashtags have become extremely popular over the last few years. For this reason, Instagram users are always searching for best practices and tips around using them.

Many of us would assume that including hashtags in our Instagram posts would help increase engagement. After all, they're supposed to help people find your posts more easily, which should help you get more views and engagement?





## The average Instagram post contains **1.014402684** hashtags.

According to this year's findings, our results tell that **using more hashtags actually decreases your average engagement rate**. This may be surprising as they seem to go against what many Instagram experts say about using hashtags. There are a few possible explanations of this:

- The most influential and engaged Instagram users get a substantial number of likes on their content naturally, not due to the use of hashtags
  - These highly engaged posts impact our averages
- Good content will receive high engagement on its own
  - Hashtags will not boost the engagement of mediocre content
- People are using irrelevant hashtags
- A lot of spammy content includes a high number of hashtags, causing Instagram users to ignore them

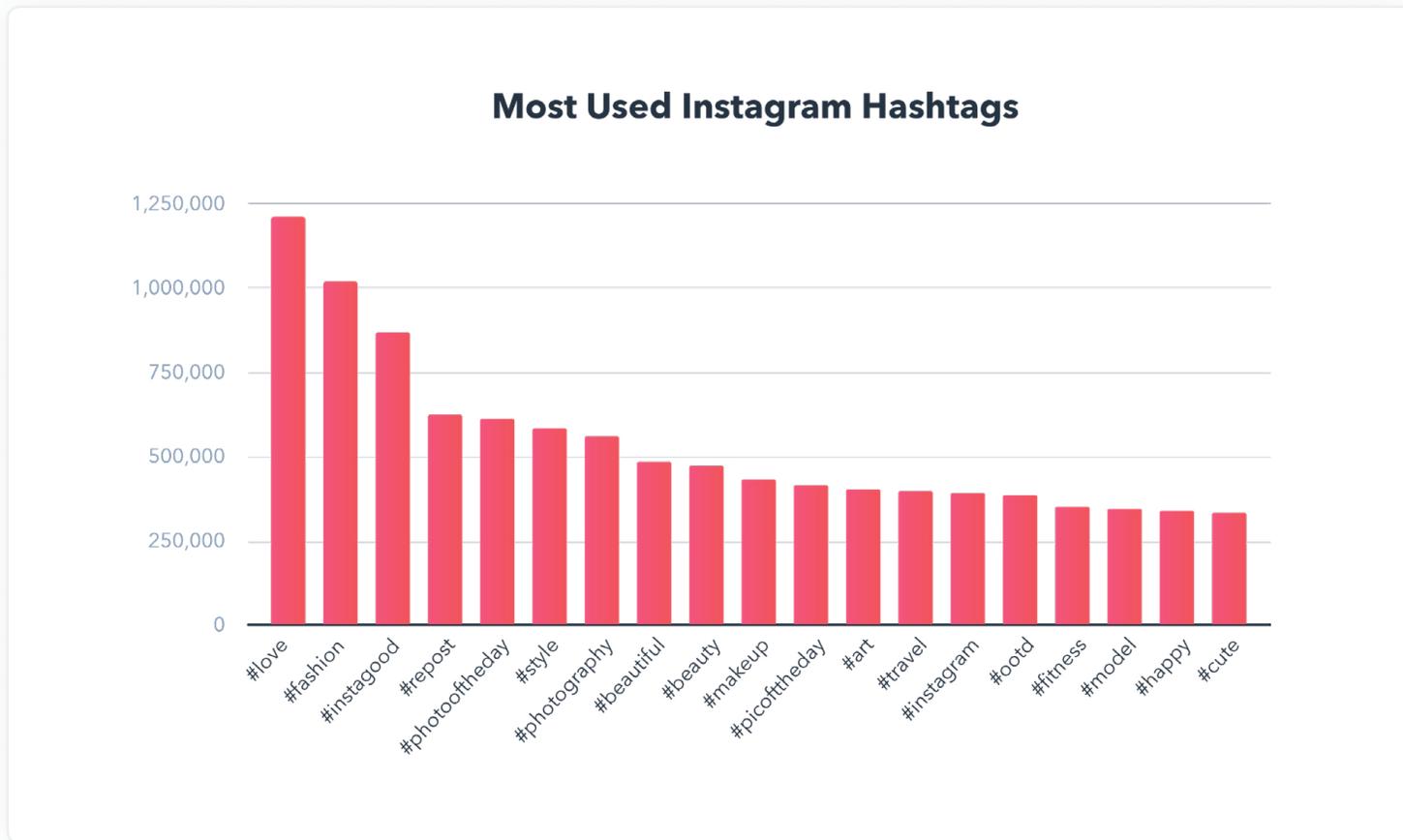
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The verdict? **It's likely better to use fewer hashtags (no more than 5) that are relevant to your post, than to use too many.**



## MOST USED INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS

There are potentially thousands of hashtags used on Instagram alone—how do you choose which ones to use? As the platform is best known for fashion, food, and lifestyle content, it’s no surprise we found the top 20 most used hashtags to fall into these categories.





## MOST ENGAGING INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS

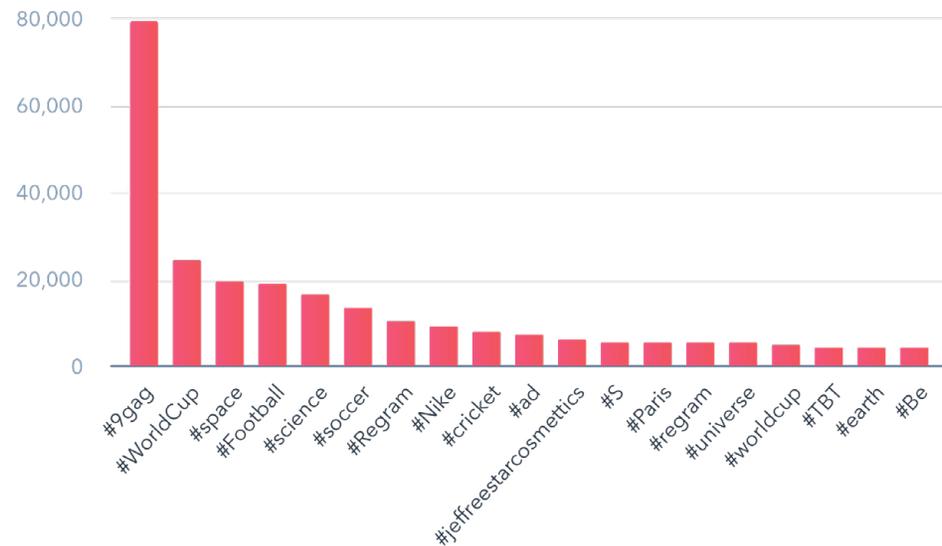
Does using the most popular hashtag mean you would get higher engagement on your content? Not necessarily.

It's not about the number of hashtags you use, or using most popular ones that matter—but using the *right* hashtags. We identified the top 20 hashtags with the highest average number of engagement.

Due to the 2018 World Cup, sports-related hashtags such as **#worldcup**, **#football**, and **#nike** dominated engagement in this year's analysis.

Other themes? Space-related hashtags such as **#Space**, **#science**, **#universe**, and **#earth** were also amongst the most engaged hashtags.

Average Number of Engagements vs. Hashtag





## KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

When it comes to hashtags, it's not about quantity, but **relevance**. Instagram allows you to include up to 30 hashtags in a post, but that doesn't mean it's beneficial for you to use that many!

Since hashtags have become so popular, people may have become desensitized and have started to ignore them altogether. For this reason, we recommend using no more than 4-5 relevant hashtags in your posts.

When considering which hashtags to use, **do a little digging on your competitors and industry influencers and see what's working for them**. Are they getting good engagement on their content? What type of hashtags are they using for posts similar to yours?

Last but not least, create **branded hashtags** for your business.

**A branded hashtag is a hashtag that's **unique** to your business. It can be as simple as your company name, tagline, or the name of one of your products or campaigns. Or it can be a hashtag that has nothing to do with your brand name, but has everything to do with your brand identity."**

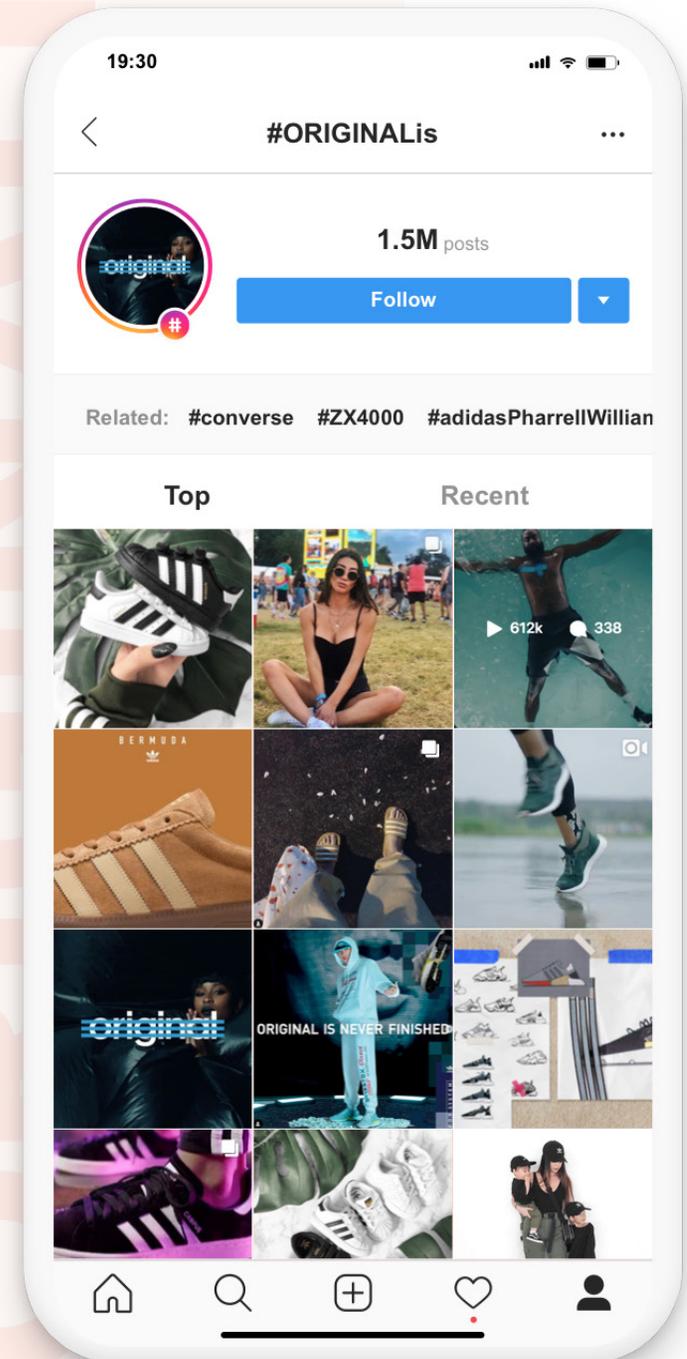
TAYLOR LOREN, HEAD OF MARKETING AT LATER



7 out of 10 hashtags on Instagram are branded

According to [Sprout Social](#), 7 out of 10 hashtags on Instagram are branded. Including branded hashtags to your content **can boost your visibility as it can be tied directly to your brand.**

So whenever you or your community posts content about your brand, be sure to include your branded hashtag. For example, Adidas' #originalis and Lululemon's #thesweatlife are both highly popular branded hashtags. Once you settle on the hashtag for your brand - all you have to do to measure its impact is with the right monitoring tool.





📍 LOCATION

#HASHTAG

@MENTION

## Tagging

You've probably been tagged on Instagram before, or have seen it happen to other users. **Tagging other Instagram users can be another way to get more exposure on your posts.**

**"Whenever you tag someone or a brand on Instagram, they get a notification and are **instantly directed** to your post. This means that they will be much more likely to like or comment on your picture – thus increasing your engagement."**

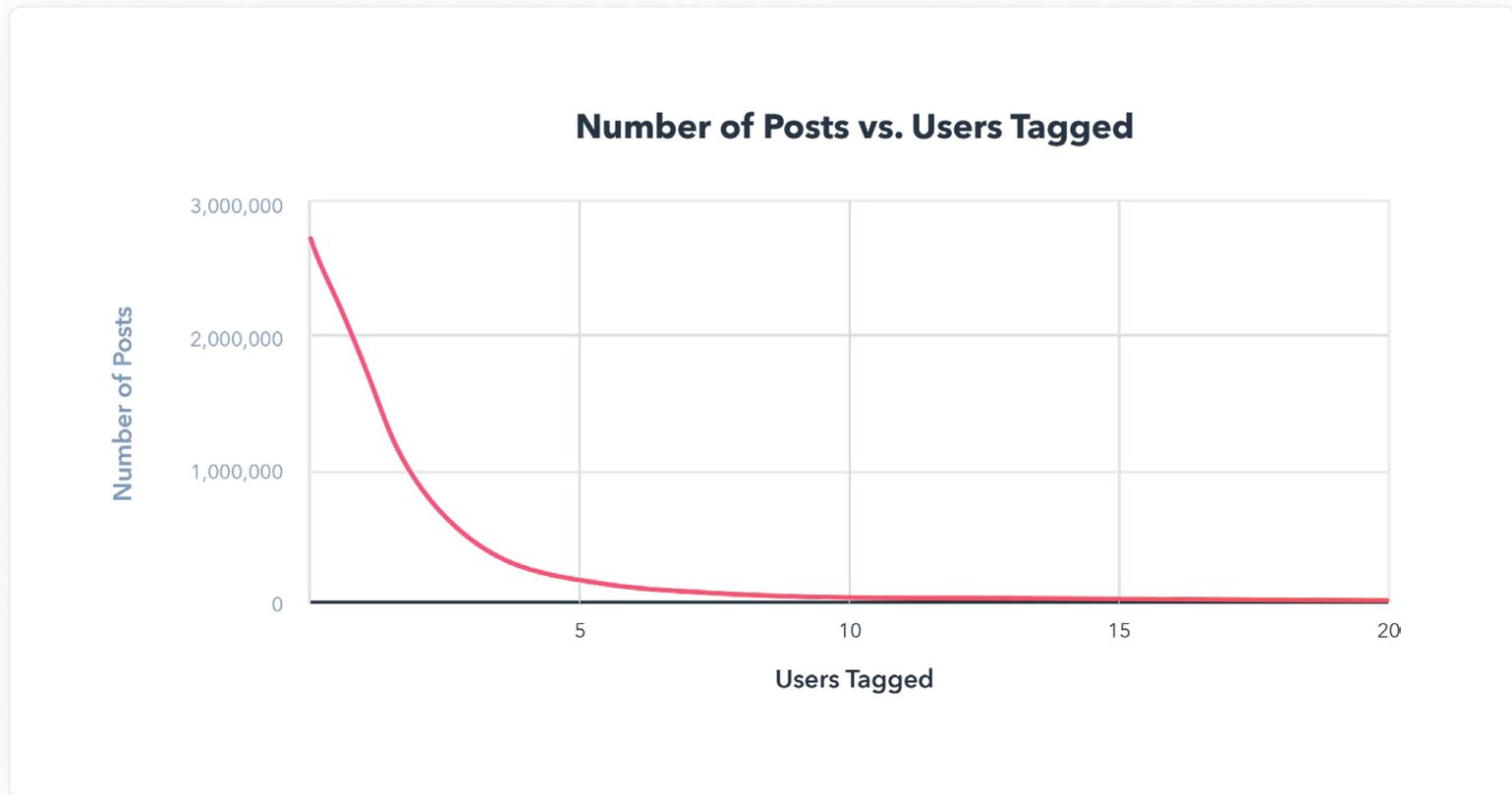
GODADDY

People tag other users to share posts with their community, to credit someone's photo or product that they've featured, or to get an influencer's attention.



## NUMBER OF USERS TAGGED

Around 40% of Instagram posts contain no tagged users. This shows a 32% decrease from last year, where 72% of posts didn't tag users. This suggests that people are tagging users in their posts much more than before, but is it actually boosting the engagement of their posts?



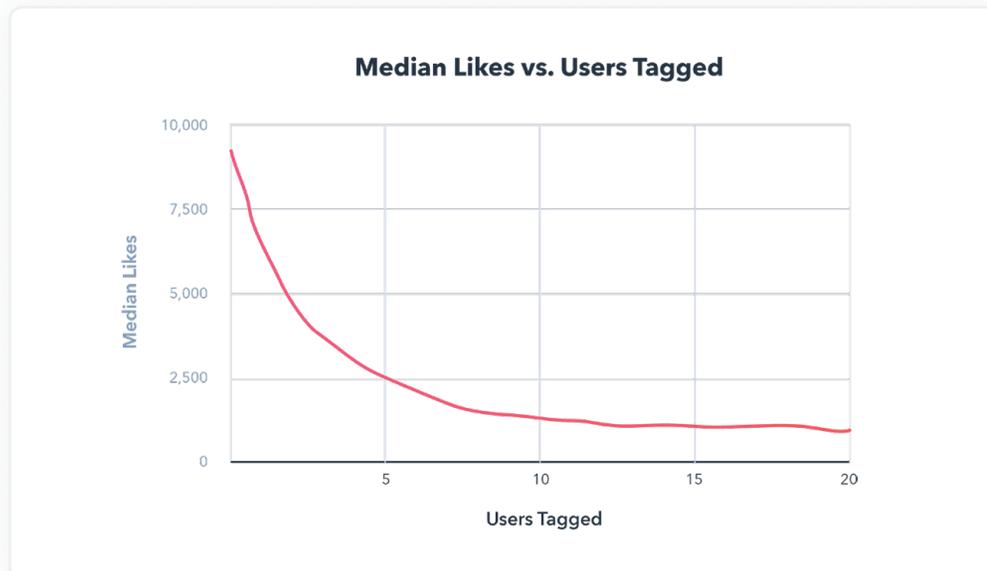


## MEDIAN LIKES PER USER TAGGED

Instagram posts with the highest amount of likes usually don't contain tagged users. This is potentially because the most liked posts are from massively popular celebrities - these usually don't include tagged users and receive a lot of likes naturally. We found that tagging more than 5 users results in a drop off in likes.

A potential explanation for this is that as people are tagging more users now, the general Instagram community is becoming more desensitized to being tagged, and are less inclined to comment or like the tagged post than before.

We used the median number rather than average in this analysis to get a more realistic representation. The average number takes into account highly popular celebrities like Beyoncé and Taylor Swift, which would skew the results.





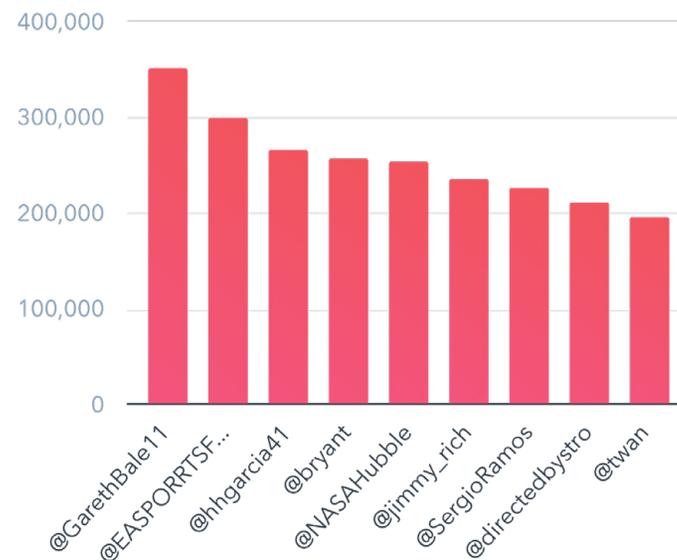
## MOST ENGAGED TAGGED USERS

Which Instagram users will get you the highest engagement rate when tagging them in your post? Kim Kardashian? Beyoncé? Nope.

The number one spot for the most engaged tagged user actually went to Gareth Bale, the Welsh footballer who plays wing for Real Madrid. Following a few spots behind is his teammate Sergio Ramos.

As Real Madrid won the 2018 Champion's League, people were tagging its players and related Instagram accounts a lot, causing the increase in engagement.

**Average Engagement vs. Instagram User**





## KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

Tagging users can potentially help you get more **brand exposure, increase engagement, and grow your community**. But you'll want to do this strategically and not just tag users at will.

Here are some ways you can include tagging into your Instagram strategy:

✔ If you're running a contest, you can set the rules so that participants "have to tag a photo featuring your brand in some way, or have them mention you in a caption or comment."([Union Metrics](#))

---

✔ When you feature content from an influencer or thought leader in your industry, be sure to tag them so they know you're interacting with their content. If they react or respond, reach out to them to start a relationship. Do the same with partners and your best customers.

---

✔ Finally, encourage your company's employees and community to tag you when it's relevant. "The most important thing to remember when tagging on Instagram is that it will be beneficial for both you AND the account you're tagging." (GoDaddy)



It's simply **harder** now to get followers on Instagram compared to a couple of years ago.

## Community

The more followers your brand has, the more popular you are, right? While this is true in some ways, it shouldn't be your number one goal for Instagram.

**It's far more valuable having a smaller, more engaged community than millions of followers who don't interact with your content.**

But if you're having a hard time getting new followers in 2019 - it's not just you. According to [Later](#), it's simply harder now to get followers on Instagram compared to a couple of years ago. This is mainly because of its strategic algorithm and the fact that there are many, many Instagram-savvy brands competing for the same followers.

For this reason, you may want to focus on keeping your existing followers engaged instead of investing too much effort into getting tons of new ones. Let's look at some trends we observed in followers.

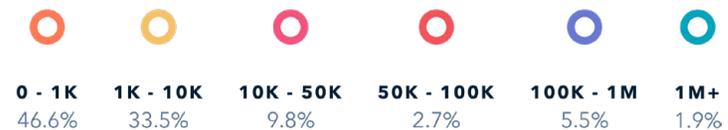
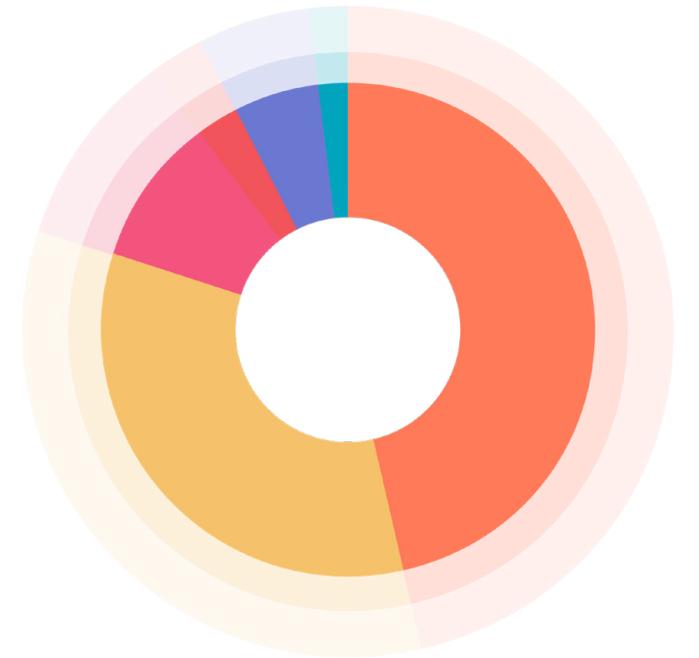


## NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS

According to our data subset, 46.6% of Instagram users have fewer than 1,000 followers. They make up the largest segment of users.

A further 33.5% of users have between 1,000-10,000 followers. This segment of users and the ones with 1,000 followers or less, make up the majority of total Instagram users.

Lastly, 9.8% have 10,000-50,000, and 2.7% have 50,000-100,000 followers. If your brand manages to have this amount of followers and still maintains a healthy engagement rate, congratulations! But if you're not - don't fret - you are among the masses.



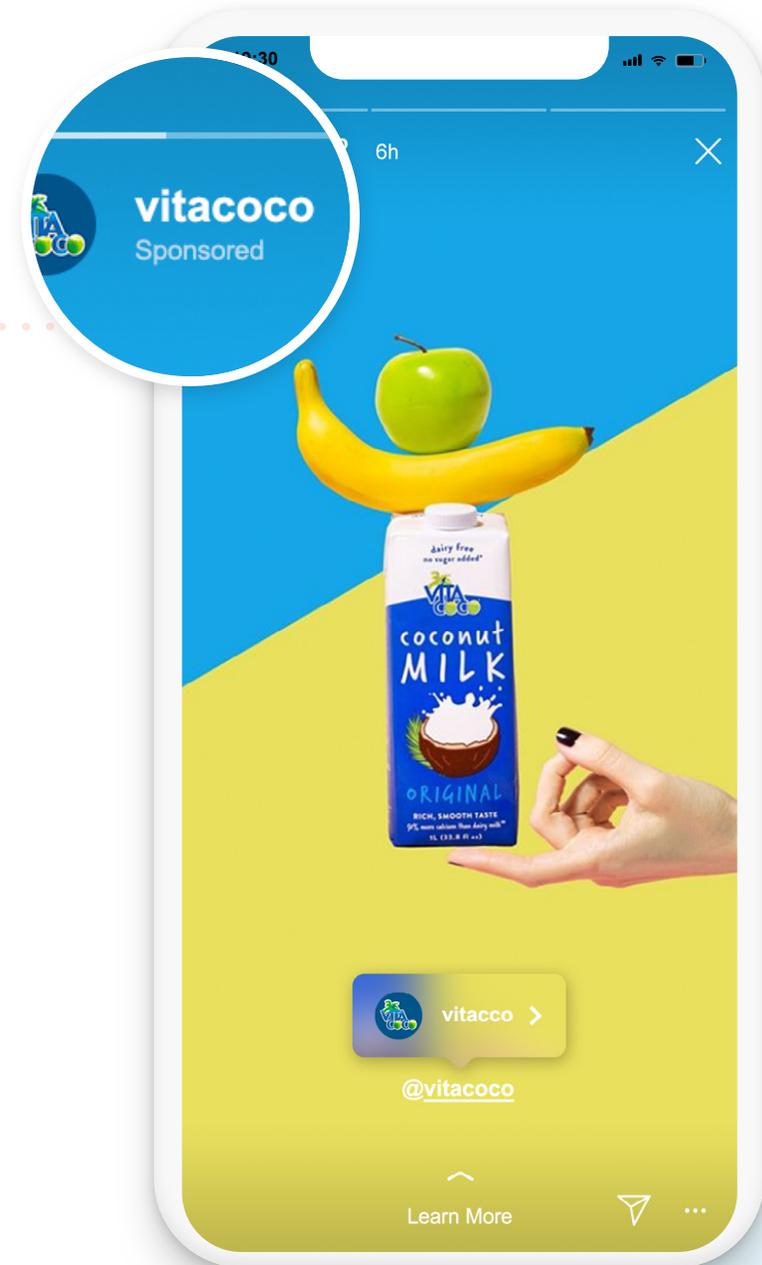
**Number of Instagram Followers**



## KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

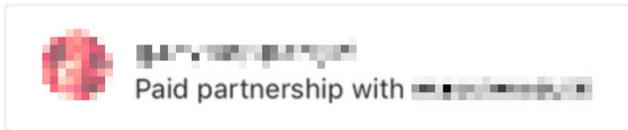
If your brand is just starting out on Instagram, it doesn't hurt to create some target ads to get the ball rolling on getting new followers. After that, it's up to you to stay engaged with your community, and to make sure that your account is continuously providing valuable content in order to attract new followers.

This can include investing time to curate a complete and thoughtful Instagram profile, using all of its features, and working with influencers to amplify your reach. At the end of the day, it pays more to have a smaller, more engaged community than millions of followers who rarely interact with you.





Marketers are willing to spend anywhere from **\$25,000 to \$100,000** on influencer marketing.



## Influencers

It's no surprise that influencer marketing has been all the rage on Instagram in 2018. In 2017, brands have already spent 1 billion dollars on influencers on the platform alone ([Mediakix](#)).

Based on a [study by Linqia](#), the majority of marketers are willing to spend anywhere from \$25,000 to \$100,000 on influencer marketing. This is potentially more than most people would spend on traditional forms of marketing such as email, search, and paid social media.



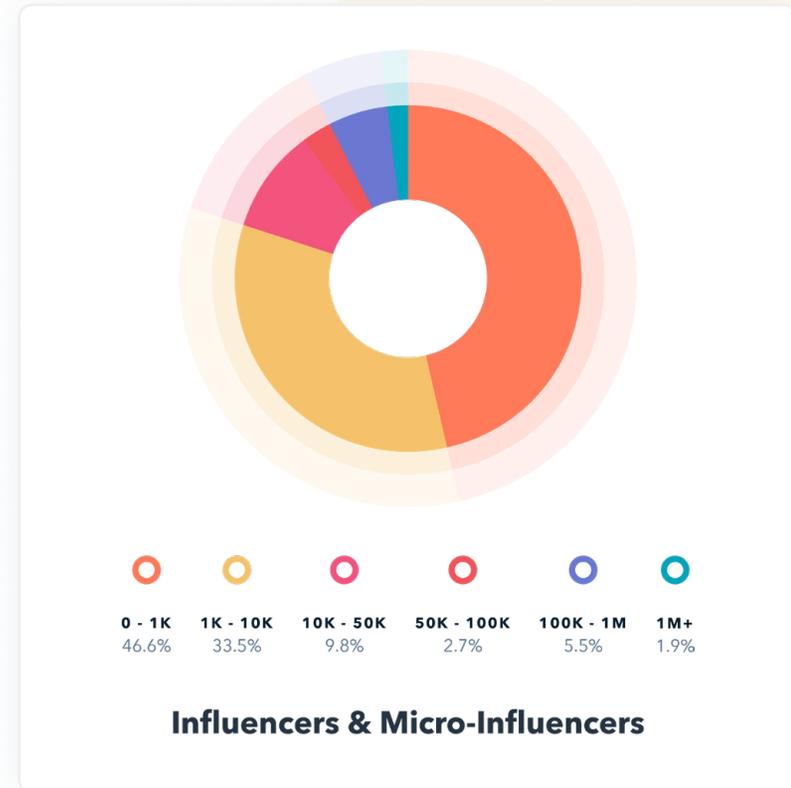
## WHY INSTAGRAM INFLUENCER MARKETING WORKS

One of the biggest reasons why influencer marketing on Instagram is so effective is because it eliminates the barriers of traditional advertising.

Influencers allowed businesses to engage with their audiences in a less direct, non-invasive, and more authentic way ([The Next Web](#)). As they helped brands tell their stories, they were creating “[warmer, ‘human’ connections](#) [with social media users] that genuinely last”.

This helped them gain their audiences’ trust on behalf of the brands—making it more natural to recommend products and services. Let’s look at the trends we discovered about Instagram influencers.

Instagram users with over 1M followers only make up 1.9% of the entire user base. These would be considered your ‘mega-influencers’.



While these highly coveted influencers may have massive followings, they would not be able to reach a targeted and relevant community as effectively as you may think. If your brand wants to gain a new, highly engaged audience, you may need someone else.

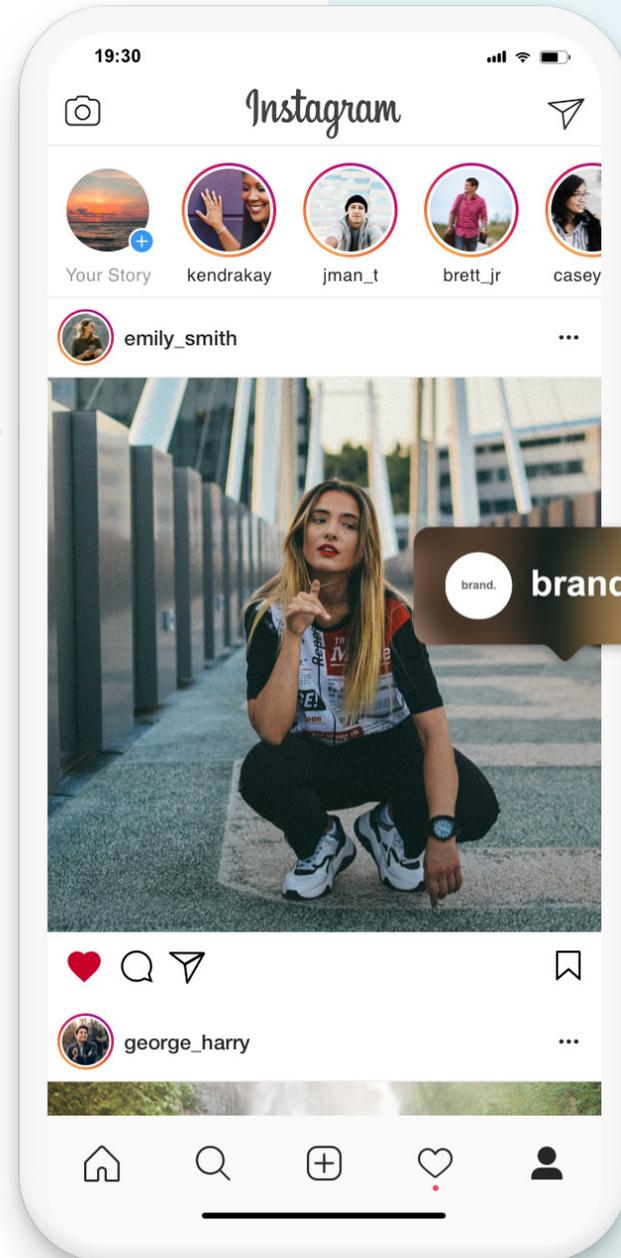
**Enter micro-influencers.**



## MICRO-INFLUENCERS

**Micro-influencers make up 2.7% of total Instagram users.** By now you've probably heard of these influential individuals with smaller communities.

Micro-influencers typically have between 50,000-100,000 followers, and despite their smaller followings - are "actually attracting much higher engagement and conversion rates than highly influential users." ([Adweek](#))





Even though they make up a tiny percent of the Instagram population, they have powerful, highly engaged communities.

So what makes micro-influencers more effective than their famous counterparts on Instagram? Here are 5 reasons:

- 1. They have smaller, more targeted audiences**
- 2. They're more credible and authentic**
- 3. They don't play hard to get**
- 4. They are more cost effective than big-name influencers**
- 5. They deliver higher engagement and more drive more conversions**

In a nutshell, micro-influencers are not only more like regular people but they're more personally invested in their online presence, making them more authentic.

Unlike mega-influencers who may simply tag a brand for a product placement, they spend hours curating the perfect Instagram post: styling the elements of the photo, choosing the best filter, writing the right caption and including all of the relevant hashtags. What's more, their fans get to know them on a deeper, more personal level. This forms a solid basis of trust, making it more natural for them to make recommendations about products or brands.



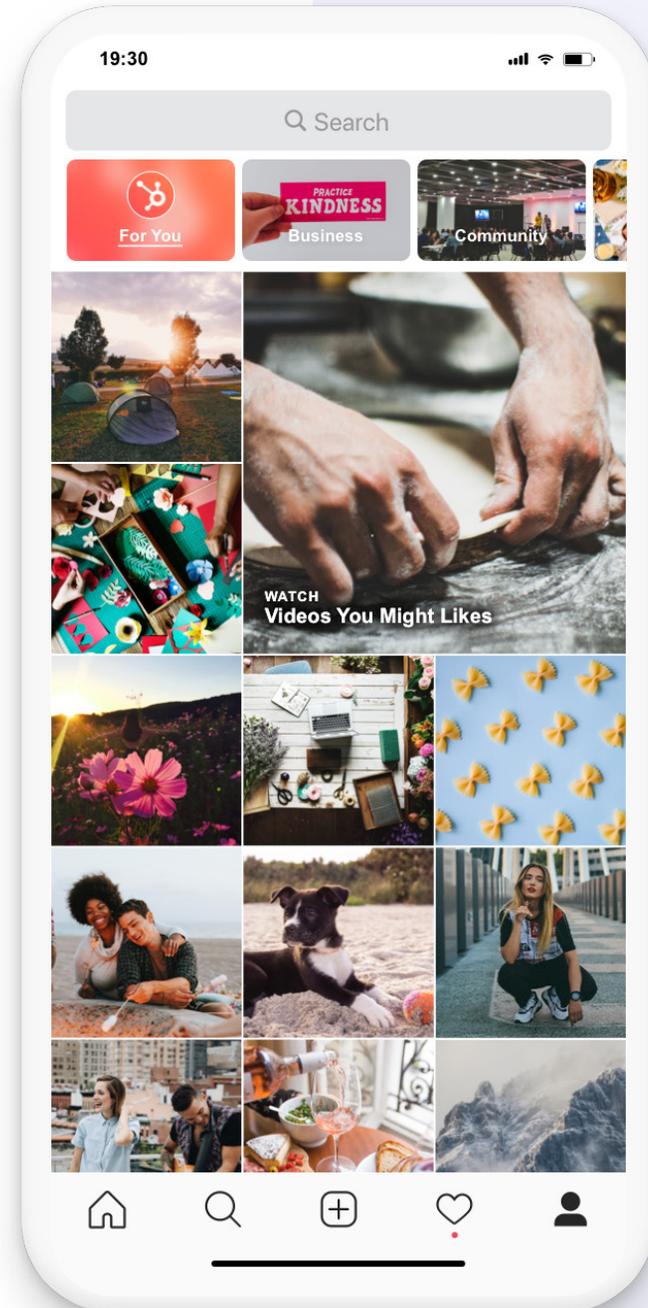


## KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

Influencer marketing may not be for every business, but working with lesser-known influencers is a great, low-cost and low-risk way to test out your brand and product in front of a small and focused audience.

Not sure how to find the right ones? You can 'follow' specific hashtags on Instagram and check out influencers who are posting about them. You can also look at the different categories on the 'explore' page and browse the content to look for influencers.

Alternatively, there are a number of tools out there that can help you identify and reach out to relevant influencers for your brand. Once you find and start working with your first influencers, you'll quickly be able to judge if this is a scalable strategy for you.





## More Statistics

Here are some more interesting Instagram statistics that could help you shape your strategy for 2019.

### 1 Billion Users

Instagram has 1 billion active users per month, having increased by 25% from 2018.

OMNICORE AGENCY

### 71% of Businesses

It used to be a platform mostly for fashion, food, and lifestyle brands. Now, we see more diverse businesses using it.

INSTAGRAM

### 71% of Americans

71% of people in the US between the ages of 18 - 24 use Instagram.

PEW

### 80% of Users

The majority of Instagram users follow a business on the social network.

INSTAGRAM



## 98% of fashion brands use Instagram.

That is almost all fashion brands!

STATISTIA

## 4.2 Billion Instagram Likes Per Day

Every day, there are a whopping 4.2 billion likes on the platform.

WIRED

## 95 million photos and videos are shared on Instagram per day.

WORDSTREAM

## 7 out of 10 hashtags on Instagram are branded.

If you were on the fence about creating a branded hashtag, this ought to convince you.

OMNICORE

## 9am -11am EST is the best time to post.

According to an analysis of 12 million posts, the best time to post is before noon.

LATER

## #metoo, #timesup, and #marchfourlives

The year's top advocacy hashtags: #metoo (1.5 million), #timesup (597K), #marchfourlives (562K).

INSTAGRAM PRESS

 mention | HubSpot

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