

# LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

*The Marketing Guide for Local Business Owners*

**October 2019**

## **7 Ways to Boost Your Instagram Following**

## **Finding New Customers Through Social Media**

## **4 Effective Tips for Increasing Customer Retention**

## **7 Ways to Give an Edge to Your Facebook Marketing Strategy**

## **10 Tips That Will Help You Make Better Business Decisions**

## **Digital Marketing: Three Types of Content to Post on Facebook**

**Infographic:**  
2019 Holiday  
Planning

**FREE!**

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Welcome to this month's edition!

It's October, which means we're officially in the last quarter of 2019 and the major holidays are right around the corner. For many local businesses, this is the most critical part of the year, and can make or break the financial health of a company.

As you're developing your holiday marketing strategy, please consider using some of today's leading marketing platforms, including Social Media and Online Marketing. Used correctly, these platforms can work well for local businesses - helping you capture a larger share of the seasonal spending.

This articles and infographic in this month's issue cover many topics that we believe are important to local business owners, including Social Media, Customer Retention, and many other timely topics.

If you're not already receiving this magazine regularly, we suggest you add your email to our subscriber list. We have some exciting articles already in the works for the upcoming issues. Don't miss out!

If you like the magazine, and know other local business owners that could benefit from receiving our magazine each month, please do us (and them) a favor by forwarding a copy to them.

Until Next Month!

Raj Deshpande  
CEO  
CroydonGate

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## A Little About Us

Local Business Marketing Magazine is proudly provided by CroydonGate.



CroydonGate was started with one goal in mind. We wanted to use the scientific approach to Online Marketing and use our expertise to help our clients achieve their goals – whether it was to increase sales & customers, branding, website design, Social Media Marketing or Mobile marketing. We wanted to give our clients the ability to leverage the same cutting edge marketing platforms that the Fortune 500 organizations use, at affordable rates.

We are a one-stop-shop for all Online Marketing needs. Our Google Certified AdWords and Analytics Experts, Social Media Marketing Gurus and expert Web designers provide the professional service to our clients which results in consistently higher ROI for our client's Online Marketing Investment.

Our goal is not just getting the customers to your site but to put a plan in place that will get them to take that next crucial step of calling you or placing that order online.

We use a scientific approach to the Online Marketing and we use Google Analytics, Multivariate A/B Testing, Sale/Search Funnel reports and other industry leading tools to understand the customer dynamics and we accurately optimize the Online Marketing parameters so that the marketing campaign works at a maximum efficiency level and increases our client's profit while reducing the conversion costs.

Give us a call to learn how we've helped businesses like yours grow revenue. If you have any questions, or would like to know how we can help you meet and exceed your marketing goals, please contact us.

Did you know that we are a full-service ad agency? Did you also know that we specialize in helping small and medium sized businesses? We customize a program that meets the needs and budgets of each of our clients, and we offer Free Initial Consultations. Give us a call to learn how we've helped businesses like yours grow revenue. Some of our services include:

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- Promotional Items
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# Marketing Calendar

Plan your marketing messages around these upcoming holidays and proclamations.

## October

Adopt A Dog Month  
Breast Cancer Awareness Month  
Bullying Prevention Month  
Car Care Month  
Dental Hygiene Month  
Domestic Violence Awareness Month  
Emotional Wellness Month  
National Pizza Month

Oct 14 - Columbus Day (U.S.)  
Oct 31 - Halloween

1st - Homemade Cookies Day  
1st - Willy Wonka Day  
2nd - Peanuts Day (Snoopy)  
3rd - Techies Day  
4th - Taco Day  
4th - Vodka Day  
4th - World Pet's Day  
5th - Do Something Nice Day

6th - Noodle Day  
9th - Beer & Pizza Day  
9th - Stop Bullying Day  
13th - Train Your Brain Day  
13th - Father-Daughter Day  
14th - Dessert Day  
14th - Spider-Man Day  
15th - Grouch Day  
16th - Boss's Day  
17th - Pasta Day  
17th - Get to Know Your Customers Day  
18th - Chocolate Cupcake Day  
18th - Newspaper Comic Strip Appreciation Day  
25th - Frankenstein Day  
26th - Make A Difference Day  
27th - Mother-in-Law Day  
28th - Chocolate Day  
29th - Cat Day  
30th - Candy Corn Day  
31st - Knock-Knock Jokes Day

## November

Adopt A Senior Pet Month  
Aviation History Month  
Epilepsy Awareness Month  
Historic Bridge Awareness Month  
International COPD Month  
Lung Cancer Awareness Month  
Military Family Appreciation Month  
National Adoption Month  
National Alzheimer's Disease Month  
National Diabetes Month  
Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

November 11 - Veteran's Day  
November 28 - Thanksgiving  
November 29 - Black Friday  
November 30 - Small Business Saturday

1st - National Family Literacy day  
1st - Sports Fan Day  
2nd - Cookie Monster Day

3rd - Daylight Saving Time Ends  
4th - Candy Day  
5th - Doughnut Day  
6th - Nachos Day  
10th - Marine Corps Birthday  
10th - Sesame Street Day  
11th - Sundae Day  
14th - Pickle Day  
15th - Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day  
16th - Fast Food Day  
17th - Take A Hike Day  
18th - Mickey Mouse's Birthday  
19th - Rocky and Bullwinkle Day  
22nd - Random Acts of Kindness Day  
23rd - Adoption Day  
23rd - Dr Who Day  
26th - Cake Day  
27th - Giving Tuesday  
28th - French Toast Day  
30th - Computer Security Day



## Finding New Customers Through Social Media

The 21st century has witnessed an upsurge in the use of the internet. The increased usage of the internet has also led to the exponential growth of social networking. Entrepreneurs are now able to find new customers through social media platforms. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn provide powerful opportunities

for businesses to be able to reach their audience. Conveying information is easier since it takes a short time and costs less than mainstream platforms such as televisions and radios.

Social media can be powerful when it comes to conveying information. A business can demonstrate what it's all about through social

media and the expertise that is possessed by staff can be showcased through social media posts.

Products that a business offers, such as phones and cars, can be posted for prospective customers to see. Before-and-after pictures of services such as carpet cleaning can depict the level of expertise involved.

Presenting products and services on social media is very critical when making an impression on new customers.

Connections are very important when it comes to running a business. Social media enables businesses to be in contact with prospective customers. Inquiries can be made through social media platforms. The prices of products and services offered can also be conveyed here. Business operation hours can also be communicated. These connections can be fostered by strategies such as discounts on a new customer's first purchase.

Social media can greatly help a business in driving traffic. This traffic can be channeled to a landing page, a blog, a niche website, or an e-commerce site. Links that are embedded in social media posts can help achieve this. New customers will find

themselves on your website because of social media.

Regular posts on social media platforms have the ability to expand the influence of a business. The more a business posts, the more likely it is to get noticed. Effective marketing strategies, however, need to be implemented for this to be successful. Targeted keywords and hashtags can be used here. Successfully using keywords and hashtags leads to the growth of an audience within social media platforms.

Businesses need to find platforms that work in their interests. Finding the right places for putting content goes hand in hand with finding new customers. A business needs to find the platforms that its targeted customers mainly use. For instance, a business that targets teenagers will have an advantage if it uses Instagram as opposed to LinkedIn.

Advertising on social media can help deliver new customers. With the help of analytics, a business can come up with specific adverts targeting customers with interests that relate to the products or services offered. Prospective customers seeing these ads may click on them. The click of the ad will forward the prospect to the business social media account or business website. If a prospective customer is pleased with the products or services, he or she may make a purchase or refer a friend.

Social media can offer many opportunities for businesses. If done in an appropriate tone, it can enable you to reach more prospective customers with tremendous results. Information regarding services and products that you offer can be easily conveyed through social media. In the long run, adopting the use of social media can help you find new customers.



## 4 Effective Tips for Increasing Customer Retention

Customer retention is one of the most commonly overlooked areas in the small business world. Many companies get it in their minds that they need to grow their customer base to be successful.

While this is true, it's not really the whole truth. Yes, new clients are needed for the expansion of any company, but to really run a successful business, both socially and financially, a company must be able to retain its customers.

From strictly a financial standpoint, it makes

sense to devote plenty of time and energy to retention, instead of just to acquisition. Increasing customer retention by only two percent actually has the same effect on your bottom line as decreasing your costs by a whopping 10 percent.

That's because it's over six times more expensive to get a new customer on board than it is to market to one you already have. A repeat customer costs less to target and also proves to be a more successful target, costing less in marketing efforts. Plus,

customers that you already have actually spend more than new ones, statistically speaking. For example in ecommerce, a new customer averages a checkout price of just under \$25.

A loyal, repeat consumer, however, averages over \$50. Therefore, not only is it more cost effective and easier to target already existing customers, but it also pays off in average purchase amount. It's for all of these reasons that the 80/20 rule is so famous in marketing.

The rule estimates that 80 percent of a company's business will come from 20 percent of its customers. That only emphasizes the importance of retention versus acquisition. While both are important, a successful company simply cannot get by without high levels of customer retention.

Looking to improve your customer retention? Here are a few tips and tricks to help you make it happen:

### **1. Engage your customers**

The biggest mistake you can make in terms of customer retention is ignoring your customers once you've brought them in. Surprisingly, this happens more than you'd think. Companies put all of their effort into customer acquisition because they think that's where the money is, but ignoring your loyal customers is also the fastest way to decrease customer retention.

Why not go a step beyond paying attention

to your customers and truly engage with them? You can do this any number of ways, from optimizing how they use your service, to holding contests to offering special promotions or discounts. You can even offer freebies now and then, because who doesn't love something free?

### **2. Work on listening**

Listening should be one of the largest focuses of all companies. Start by surveying your customers or acquiring feedback and then implement changes accordingly. But listening doesn't just mean hearing what your customers have to say. It also means paying close attention to trends in your market. You want to be on the front of anything new in your industry. This means doing your research.

Try holding focus groups or paying attention to similar fields to see what's trending there. Knowing what's going to happen before it does leaves you extra time to ramp up marketing efforts and

take full advantage of any shifts in the market. The more with the times your company is, the more likely you'll be able to hold onto existing customers, rather than lose them to trendier competitors.

### **3. Customize and personalize**

Customers love when your services or products fit their needs and wishes. While it helps to add in first names to email campaigns or have readily available data to refer to when a customer calls, truly savvy companies go above and beyond basic data dropping. With online shopping now a dominating industry, many companies take advantage of personalization in their efforts to offer new products.

The databases pay close attention to what each customer buys and, based on common trends, recommends new products or services accordingly. Amazon is a great example of a company that's taken full advantage of this. If

someone buys an iPad, Amazon may suggest some of the top-selling iPad cases or other accessories to go with it. Using personalization in a way that ups sales is one of the best things a business can do to increase customer retention because you're taking the work out of the purchasing process for the customer.

#### **4. Keep an eye on the ones that may be unhappy**

One way to make sure that you keep your customer abandonment rate down is to make sure that you watch out for potential "red flag" customers. Look for early signs that a customer may be unhappy or on a track to leave you. This may mean something as obvious as a complaint, but it may also be subtler.

You can even go as far as to look for a group of customers who have recently had a decrease in email open rates, if your company relies heavily on email marketing. Then, build a process to manage

these customers. This process should be totally unique to your company.

If you see a decrease in email opens, it may mean sending a unique email campaign, featuring less aggressive and more carefully constructed emails to those who draw these red flags. If the red flag is a complaining customer, it may mean giving them a special offer or gift for being a loyal customer. Your company should choose a plan that fits best for your product or service and marketing technique.

By really honing in on both the proactive and reactive techniques, any company has the opportunity to increase their customer retention. Remember, in the long run, retention is at least equally, maybe even more important than customer acquisition. By building brand loyalty and keeping customers coming back to your business, you're spending less on marketing efforts and likely making more money off of each customer's

purchase, which can mean only good things for your bottom line.

craft your updates in a way that drives engagement. Another significant unwritten rule for social media marketing is to make sure you aren't talking to yourself.

Therefore, everything you create needs to encourage discussion from your audience. There are several ways you can achieve this. Perhaps, two of the most effective are asking questions to your audience and Facebook polls. Obviously, this works even better when you are creating content that your audience is most interested in.

Companies must get their digital marketing strategy right and social media is an integral part of that. The preceding article has taken a distinct look at Facebook and the type of content that performs well on the platform. So, remember to focus on videos and Facebook Live, visual content and ask questions and use polls.



## Digital Marketing: Three Types of Content to Post on Facebook

Brands know the importance of a solid digital marketing strategy. Social media marketing has an important part to play in this and Facebook is a platform suitable for most companies. This article looks at some of the best types of content to post on the social media site.

### ***1. Videos and Facebook Live***

You may think of sites

such as YouTube when it comes to video content and perhaps Facebook, which is not exclusively a video content platform. However, video content uploaded directly onto the website can perform exceptionally well. For the best results, it's advisable to stick to short video content that is easy to understand and follow. Subtitles are also a good idea because users will not always have their sound on when watching the content.

If you want to take your video marketing strategy up a level, you may also want to consider using Facebook Live. The one thing that is even better than video content is live streaming, and it provides so many more options, such as covering live events and having real-time interaction with your audience. You can take advantage of this to connect with your audience in new and

unique ways.

## **2. Visual content**

Facebook is also a visual social media platform. In essence, this means the most popular content typically contains stunning visuals whereas links to articles, for example, don't perform so well. Therefore, finding success on Facebook involves a high level of creativity with your updates. When you want to promote web content, you might want to consider posting it with a separate image.

It's also true that you only want to use purely text-based updates on an occasional basis. It's undoubtedly clear across social media that visuals are often the way to go. Spending a bit of time with templates and some trial and error can bring significant rewards on the platform. So, focus on making your Facebook content as visually appealing as possible.

## **3. Polls and questions**

The way you present your

content on Facebook is crucially important. However, you also need to craft your updates in a way that drives engagement. Another significant unwritten rule for social media marketing is to make sure you aren't talking to yourself.

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Companies must get their digital marketing strategy right and social media is an integral part of that. The preceding article has taken a distinct look at Facebook and the type of content that performs well on the platform. So, remember to focus on videos and Facebook Live, visual content, ask questions and use polls.

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## 7 Ways to Give an Edge to Your Facebook Marketing Strategy



When it comes to marketing, Facebook is here to stay. It's one of the main marketing tools that today's startups, small businesses and even enterprise companies are using. In fact, 84 percent of business to business (B2B) marketers use social media to market and one of the most (if not the most) popular channel is Facebook.

Today, 42 percent of marketers believe Facebook is absolutely critical to their businesses. That number is up 75 percent from just two years ago. While the retail industry is actually the one that tends to drive

the most revenue from Facebook, that's not to say that companies in other industries can't too. Below are seven tips to help you with your marketing strategy using Facebook.

### 1. Avoid Auto Posting

Posting automatically to Facebook is never a good idea. You can see this trend with many businesses that sync their Twitter and Facebook accounts. You can watch exactly the same posts go up to both at exactly the same time. Some even say "posted from Twitter" right on the Facebook post. This is an incredibly fast way to decrease your

engagement and diminish your following.

Another common form of auto-posting is when an article or blog post is published and companies have it set to post directly to Facebook. These usually come along with some generic language, having pulled directly from the title and description of a post without a second thought.

Auto posting causes a 70 percent decrease in comments and likes on Facebook. So just take the extra time to create unique posts for your Facebook feed instead of auto posting.

## 2. Devote Time to Your Campaigns

Facebook has become key to many brands' marketing campaigns. That means that it deserves your time and attention. When social media first became big, it wasn't big with businesses. It was sort of glazed over as something that marketers needed to check off their to-do lists and wasn't really utilized until more recent years. Now, the importance of it is clear, yet some companies still glaze over it, throwing up a post now and then, but not really bothering to put much time or thought into it.

## 3. Focus on Images

Images have some serious share potential and the great thing about sharing on Facebook is that it is more likely to have a viral effect. That's why, for many brands, photos are the way to go for maximum impact on the social front. That said, it's always important to keep a close eye on the type of image you choose. Experiment a bit and you'll quickly get a feel for the type of images your fans prefer. Stick with

those!

## 4. Leverage Your Site's Traffic

Don't just think of Facebook as a way to bring in new customers. Remember that it's also a way to engage with the ones you already have. Facebook is a great customer retention tool because it allows your brand the freedom to have a little more personality, not to mention to communicate directly with your customers. So, go ahead and throw up a Facebook like button directly on your website.

## 5. Give Your Posts Some Personality

Posting dry content with boring statuses on Facebook isn't going to get you anywhere. Facebook posts usually come with a bit of a punch. Experiment a bit to find your own brand's Facebook personality, but just keep in mind that it can differ quite a bit from the typical tone on your company's site. Popular Facebook "personalities" range across the map, including:

- Cute
- Sassy
- Funny
- Sarcastic
- Punny

## 6. Schedule Your Facebook Posts

Just because you don't want to auto-post, doesn't mean you can't schedule them to go out ahead of time. It simply isn't efficient to have to sit down and post every time you want a post to go live, especially for companies posting dozens of times each day. Luckily, Facebook has a handy scheduling tool that solves this problem.

You can simply enter a post (this works for photos, videos, anything else that you may be posting as well) and click the clock icon in the bottom left of the post. You can schedule far in advance and even go back to review which posts you have scheduled, just to make sure you have them set correctly. It's a fairly intuitive tool, but in case you wanted to read up on a step-by-step, Facebook lays it all out for you.

## 7. Measure Your Success

Measure how you're measuring up on social media, especially Facebook. Facebook offers the incredibly helpful Facebook Insights tool that lets you track everything from how far your posts reach to which demographics make up your Facebook fan base. It's important to keep an eye on how you're doing because it will tell you which posts do better than others, both in terms of content and even post type (photo vs. video vs. status vs. link, etc.).

Your success on Facebook can give you some good insight into trends

and favorites that your audience as a whole prefers and even help you strategize new marketing efforts outside of social media. Fifty-three percent of social media marketers don't track their progress at all. Don't be one of them.

### Conclusion

It's not a secret that companies struggle to generate leads directly from Facebook. Many get frustrated when they don't see a direct cash flow coming in from the social platform. But this is no reason to worry. While it's great to drive a little revenue directly from Facebook, let's not let

ourselves be fooled into believing that that's all it's about.

Facebook, like all forms of social media, is about engaging in a conversation and enhancing brand recognition. Someone may not become your immediate customer, but they may be more likely to buy your products or services in the future simply because they like what you do on Facebook. Therefore, you should measure your success on Facebook more from numbers around your reach, following and engagement instead of how many leads you generated.

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## 10 Tips That Will Help You Make Better Business Decisions

When you are an entrepreneur, it can be tough making important business decisions. The buck, as they say, stops with you. If you make the right decisions, your business will flourish. Make bad decisions, though, and it will all be down to you. Procrastination is not going to drive a business forward, though. Some people would even say that a bad decision is better than no decision at all. So, if you find yourself being indecisive, here are 10 tips to help you make better business decisions.

### 1. Define Your Goals

When you are making important business decisions you must have well-defined goals. And, those goals must be quantifiable and measurable. Having a goal of increasing turnover is all well and good. But, by how much do you want to increase turnover by, and in what timescale? If you don't set well-defined goals, you will have nothing to measure the success of a decision against. And, you and your team will have no targets

to aim for.

### 2. Consider all the Possible Outcomes

Consider the impact on your business that your decision could have. Look at both the potential positive impacts of your decision and the negative ones. Moving to larger premises, for example, might allow you to increase production. But, could your business afford to pay the high rental costs if the demand for your product falls. It is impossible to foresee

everything. Even so, you should consider the impact of as many of the possible outcomes as you can.

### **3. Break Major Decisions Down**

Before you make a major decision, break down that decision into its parts. Relocating a business, for example, will have many implications for a business. Breaking down a decision will make it easier to cost each of the steps that your decision will entail. It will also make it easier to identify any obstacles that may lie ahead.

### **4. Ask for Other People's Opinions**

Even if you are 100% convinced in your mind that your decision is the right one, it never hurts to get a second opinion. In some cases, getting legal or professional advice will be essential. In other cases, the input of business peers, employees, and friends will be helpful. In the end, the decision will have to be your own. Even so, input from other people can be invaluable.

Even if you do choose to ignore their advice, it will help to ensure that you have considered all the possibilities.

### **5. Step Back and Take A Break**

Don't get rushed into making decisions. Take your time, relax, and think it through first. Most business decisions do not need to be instant decisions. So, give yourself time to weigh up all the facts and all the potential outcomes. Sometimes giving yourself a complete break from the decision-making process can be helpful. The subconscious mind is very good at organizing thoughts. That's why sleeping on a problem can often bring unexpected clarity.

### **6. Don't Try to Make Everyone a Winner**

Running a business can mean that you must make some tough decisions. Some of your decisions may even impact on people's personal lives. Promoting one member of your team may disappoint other members of the

team. Some people may have to lose their jobs so that others can have job security. Even so, you must make decisions based on what is best for your business, not on what will please the majority.

### **7. Look Closely at the Numbers**

All important business decisions will have an impact on cash flow and profit. So, make sure that you have adequate financial information about business decisions. Look at financial forecasts for all the possible outcomes. Assess the potential impact on both profits and on cash flow.

### **8. Be Open to Other Possible Solutions**

Be prepared to think outside of the box when making business decisions. Is there a solution that you haven't yet considered? Is there a way that you can turn an obstacle into an opportunity? Keep an open mind. Consider even the possibilities that go against your first instinct. Look at each possibility from an objective point of

view before you rule it out.

## 9. Don't Let Past Experiences Rule Your Head

You will have learned from past experiences. But don't let the past cloud your judgment on current decisions. Each business decision that you take will have its own set of unique parameters. There is no guarantee that a decision that you made in the past will have the same outcome as a decision you make today. Look at each challenge you face with a fresh pair of eyes. Make

decisions based on the facts that you have in front of you now.

## 10. Structure Your Decision-Making Process

A structured approach to your decision-making process will help you make better decisions. Develop a checklist of things to consider when making an important decision. Then, check each one of those items off every time you are considering your options. You can only make decisions based on the information that you have to hand. Even

so, a structured decision-making process will ensure that you don't miss anything.

## Conclusion

Making business decisions can be a daunting task. Not least of all because no one can ever be 100% certain that the decision they make will be the right one. You can, though, increase your chances of making the right decisions. You can do that by analyzing the possible outcomes and weighing up the pros and cons in a logical fashion.

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## 7 Ways to Boost Your Instagram Following



According to Brandwatch, Instagram has over 25 million business accounts and more than one billion active users per month. It's the second most engaged social network after Facebook and around 50% of Instagrammers follow business accounts. This means that an optimized business account on Instagram can boost your brand's awareness and sales.

With a larger audience, you'll enjoy more opportunities to engage with prospects and achieve higher conversion rates. Although brands sometimes choose to pay for followers and likes, you'll enjoy better results if you build your following organically. For example, according to Sprout Social, you'll find about

48 million fake Instagram accounts on the platform. Fake followers won't visit your landing page, make a purchase or recommend your brand to others. So, to help you increase your brands' authentic following on Instagram, here's a list of the top 7 proven ways to attract a huge Instagram following.

### Business Account Optimization

Your brand's Instagram bio is like a site's homepage. If your account doesn't include a bio, a relevant username, a profile image or captions, users can't tell who it belongs to. The profile must convince new users to follow you and visit your website. Include a link to a product or services landing page for lead generation. Although

you can also link to your homepage, linking to a landing page will help you create a cohesive user experience.

For the best results, your account's name must include less than 30 characters and a keyword. Use the same username as on your brand's other social accounts. This way, followers from other social platforms can easily find you. And use the 150 characters allowance in your bio to feature your brand's identity to convince users to follow you.

### Photography and Editing

A post's quality weighs heavily on Instagram. Unlike other platforms such as Twitter, where followers may overlook

a couple of bad tweets, poor quality and irrelevant photos on Instagram can cause serious damage. You don't have to be a professional photographer to post on Instagram, but you must follow the best practices before you start posting.

Considering that Instagram is a mobile app, you're most likely using your smartphone to take photos. Top-quality posts focus on one subject at a time, include white space, and intriguing perspectives. Also, symmetry and humor are essential ingredients for engaging posts. Before you add a photo to your Instagram profile, use third party editing apps. Although the social network offers basic editing features, they're not enough for an amazing photo.

### **Posting Schedule and Timing Best Practices**

Before you publish content to your account, make sure you have at least 15 posts ready. This way, when users visit your Instagram profile, they'll know you're regularly posting content.

Create a social content calendar and plan your Instagram posts. Also, set up a backlog of posts for emergencies. You must always consider your target audience when you publish content. Your audience's preferences affect the timing and frequency of your posts.

Publish photos on Instagram any time Monday through Thursday, except between 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm. To engage your audience in the US, combine Central and Eastern time zones, but for audiences outside the US, use their specific time zones. You'll generate higher engagement rates if you post at 5:00 am starting on Tuesday until Friday. That's because, usually, the first thing people do when they wake up is check their smartphones. On weekends, post on Saturday around 11:00 am.

### **A Consistent Brand Voice and Look**

Showcasing how your product is made or sharing your employees perspective about your product, humanizes your brand. This increases your

brand's trustworthiness and makes it relatable. When you're developing a brand voice, consider your target audience and the platform you're using. For example, beauty influencers and important brands on Instagram have a casual style and voice but they also remain relevant, on-brand, and professional. When you've created a specific voice, maintain consistency throughout your comments, captions, bio, and conversations with your followers.

### **Use Super Relevant Hashtags**

A hashtag connects different users' conversations who would otherwise be separated into different streams. Super relevant hashtags expose your posts to a larger audience beyond your followers. But you must use hashtags in a smart way. Limit the number of hashtags per caption to about 7 and don't use gimmicks such as #likeforlike, #like4likes, or #tagsforlike. Although they may temporarily boost your following, these users only want you to follow them back or

they're spammers.

The best way to discover which hashtags your audience uses is to check different hashtags on Instagram's search feature in the "Explore" tab. An effective approach is to use trending hashtags such as #tbt, #TransformationTuesday, or #MotivationMonday. And when you've gained a decent following, you can create your own hashtag including your brand's name or motto. It's an efficient way to develop your brand on Instagram and create a cohesive Instagram presence.

### **Engaging and Shareable Post Captions**

Great captions humanize your brand and help you win more followers. And if you make your content shareable, you'll enjoy increased exposure. A winning caption on Instagram includes clever comments, relevant emojis and hashtags, and calls to action.

Clever comments and jokes, which are audience-appropriate personalize your Instagram account. For example, Netflix's

Instagram account and subaccounts include jokes, which you can relate to just like a friend. Netflix uses a casual, humorous, and trendy style. But it also stays on-brand.

Another efficient way to improve your posts' shareability is to ask questions in your captions or include a call-to-action. For example, say "Double-click if you find this interesting" or "Share your ideas in the comments."

Additionally, emojis can increase your engagement rates in terms of likes, shares, and comments. They add more personality to your account and make your posts stand out on a feed. Add relevant emojis to optimize your brand's posts.

### **Start Conversations**

An effective way to increase brand awareness on Instagram is to engage in conversation. The Q2 2016 report published by Sprout Social shows that about 35% of clients use social networks for customer care. Social media outranks other customer care channels such as email, live chat

or toll-free numbers. So, you must be active and supportive on your Instagram account.

Respond to comments or questions on your account to attract more prospects and reach higher conversions. After a positive interaction with your brand, prospects are more likely to purchase your product or service. You'll also gain more followers if you grow a conversation around your feed.

As the second-largest social network after Facebook, Instagram is perfect to increase brand awareness and boost your sales. But the competition is huge. Although some brands pay for followers or likes, they don't enjoy real success. For the best results, grow your following organically. Play by the rules, implement the best practices and you'll achieve real ROI. Although growing your following organically takes effort and time, you'll have an engaged, loyal, and involved community. It's what all brands aim for on Instagram.



# FUN FACTS

October is the tenth month in the Gregorian calendar, received its name from the Latin numeral octo meaning “eight”, because in the original Roman calendar it was the eighth month.

Germany’s Oktoberfest originally began on October 12, 1810, the wedding day of King Ludwig I.

## October Milestones:

- October 1st 1890 - Yosemite National Park was established by the U.S. Congress
- October 1st 1971 - Walt Disney World opened near Orlando, Florida.
- October 2nd 1950 - Peanuts by Charles M. Schulz was first published.
- October 4th 1957 - The USSR launched Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite to orbit the Earth
- October 5th, 1962 - The Beatles’ first single, Love Me Do backed with P.S. I Love You, is released in the United Kingdom
- October 10th, 1971 - Sold, dismantled and moved to the United States, London Bridge reopened in Lake Havasu City, Arizona
- October 14th 1926 - Winnie the Pooh, by A. A. Milne, was first published.
- October 16th 1923 - The Walt Disney Company was founded by Walt Disney and his brother, Roy Disney

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# 2019 HOLIDAY PLANNING

## How Consumers Shop

Based on 2018 Holiday Shopping

47% 41% 38% 30% 28%

found gifts  
through an  
online search

took gift ideas  
from friends  
and family

found gifts  
within a retail  
store

took gift ideas  
from wish lists

found gifts in  
advertising  
circulars



## When Shoppers Begin the Holiday Shopping



\*4 in 10 shoppers will start  
their holiday shopping by  
November 1.

11.7%

Before  
September

6.7%

September

21.3%

October

42.0%

November

15.7%

First 2  
weeks of  
December

2.7%

Last 2  
weeks of  
December



## Rise of Social and Mobile Shopper



## Consumers Who Will Take Advantage of Following Services When Online Shopping

94% Free Shipping

50% Buy Online, Pick Up in Store

16% Expedited Shipping



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