

INSTAGRAM CHECKLIST AND TOOLBOX

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THE *Art* OF INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a visual medium, so high quality images are a must. Below is a summary of guidelines from my presentation so you can easily see where you're on track and where you need to improve.

Visual Strategy

Don't have a visual strategy documented yet? No worries, it's simple to create. Before you get to the fun design part, start by answering these three integral questions which will help you dive deeper into the core of your brand.

- What does your brand stand for?
- What does your audience care about?
- What makes your brand unique compared to your competitors?

The foundation of your visual strategy lies at the intersection of the answers to these three questions.

Content Diversity

Having diverse content means using a varied mix of formats and types to engage your audience in different ways. Check off which ones you are already doing and circle others you would like to create:

Types:

- Product / brand photos
- "Lifestyle" or in-action shots
- User-generated content
- Behind-the-scenes

Formats:

- Text / quotes
- Photographs
- Videos
- Stories
- Carousels

Perfecting your Grid

67% of visits to your brand profile come from *people who aren't following you yet*, so it's vital make a good, fast impression with a cohesive aesthetic and clear content strategy.

Check if you have documented guidelines for each of the following visual strategy attributes:

- Color palette
- Feel and tone
- Editing style
- Depth / white space
- Grid placement

**If you're not sure where to start, hire a designer to help you create an aesthetic based on the answers to your visual strategy questions.*

THE *Strategy* OF INSTAGRAM

An effective Instagram account goes far beyond just having “pretty pictures.” An intentional, strategic plan must be in place to get the most out of this platform and target your audience effectively.

The Instagram algorithm is a fickle, ever-changing thing. You must understand its underlying workings in order to reverse-engineer success.

Work your way through the three core factors of the algorithm here. This will help you make sure you have a strategy in place to maximize the reach of your posts every time.

1. Engagement

- Do you always respond to every comment on your own posts?
- Do you engage daily on your followers' accounts?
- Do you whip up engagement right after you publish in order to maximize your posts' reach?

2. Timeliness

- Find out your best times/days to post for the most engagement.
- Double-check what time zone most of your followers are in.
- Use a 3rd party tool to confirm.

3. Relevancy

- List 5-7 topic “buckets” based on your Instagram content strategy.
- Find related hashtags using the native Instagram features.
- Research more hashtags using [DisplayPurposes.com](https://displaypurposes.com).
- Set-up a hashtag library with tags separated by category.

Instagram Stories

With 300 million daily users, Stories are a potent way to reach your audience in a more direct way.

- Post 5-7 stories a day with varied formats.
- Look for engagement opportunities - including direct messages, swipe-ups, polls.
- Share or re-purpose your feed posts in your stories.
- Give a behind-the-scenes look into your brand, the people behind it, and the stories you have to tell.

Strategy continued on the next page...

You Don't Own Your Followers

Create opportunities to draw your audience off of the platform and into your own channels. Instagram could change on a whim - having a negative effect on your business - so aim to capture email addresses in order to nurture the relationships you've built.

- Include calls-to-action within your posts to visit the link in your bio.
 - Have over 10k followers? Take advantage of the "swipe up" feature on Stories to drive people to your content.
 - Offer-up giveaways, freebies, or useful gated content in order to capture emails.
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Community Growth

It's not as easy to grow your following anymore post-chronological feed, and expanding your community takes time and effort. Stay away from using automation or bots, which are against Instagram policies. Here is a simple manual method to get the attention of your target audience:

- Create a target list of followers based on people who follows your competitors or engages with hashtags that are relevant to your brand.
- Manually follow, like, comment, and generally engage with your target list to initiate the relationship and hopefully draw them to your profile.

RECOMMENDED TOOLS

My Top 5 Favorites

[Snapseed](#) [Clipomatic](#)
[A Color Story](#) [Splice](#)
[Unfold](#)

Photo Editing Apps

[Retouch](#) [Lightroom](#)
[VSCO](#) [Photoshop Express](#)
[Afterlight](#)

Content Format Apps

[Boomerang](#) [Hyperlapse](#)
[Layout](#)

Video Editing Apps

[Pixaloop](#) [Life Lapse](#)
[Inshot](#) [Continual](#)
[Burstio](#) [Filmm](#)
[8mm](#)

Design Apps

[Canva](#) [A Design Kit](#)
[Font Candy](#) [Hype Type](#)
[Over](#)

Strategic Instagram Planning

[Later](#) [Planoly](#)
[UNUM](#) [Preview](#)
[PLANN](#)

Deep Analytics + Engagement

[Later](#) [Iconosquare](#)
[PeopleMap](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Want to learn more about Instagram marketing? Check out these articles on my blog to dig deeper.

[Instagram Marketing 101: A Definition with Context](#)

[10 Instagram Myths Vs. Reality: Marketing Rumors Busted!](#)

[Later Vs. Planoly: Which Tool Should You Use to Plan Your Instagram?](#)

[Watch my "Instagram Marketing with Intention" Keynote Speech](#)

[How to Batch 2 Weeks of Instagram Content in 1 Hour Using Later](#)

[25 Best Apps for Instagram Content Creation](#)

Any Questions?

I'm here to help!

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