



10 TIPS TO MAKE INSTAGRAM YOUR MOST EFFECTIVE SOCIAL CHANNEL

Instagram continues to grow with more than [300 million monthly active users](#). And those users spend more time on that social network than almost anywhere else. [Click to Tweet!](#)

According to a fall 2014 poll from [Cowen and Company](#), people spend an average of 20 minutes per day on Instagram. Only Facebook and Tumblr rank higher (42.1 and 21.2 minutes respectively). [Click to Tweet!](#)

Now the network has larger ambitions: taking over Twitter's position as the go-to source for information as it happens. [Kevin Systrom](#), co-founder and CEO of Instagram, says, "It's a 100 percent visual experience that is more efficient than TV."

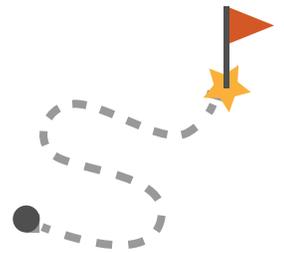
The goal could quickly become reality. Recent [updates to the social network's real-time Search and Explore functions](#) have made searching and, more importantly, finding visual content effortless and immediate.

How can you leverage the changes to make Instagram your brand's most effective social channel? Consider these 10 tips from Cision. They'll make it easier to be found, followed and talked about.

1. Know your objectives.

Why does your brand want to be on Instagram? Is it to attract a new audience through visual storytelling? Monitor breaking news? To engage more with an existing audience?

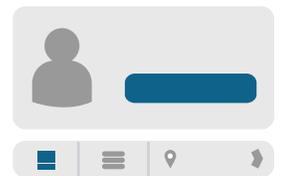
Make sure Instagram efforts fit into the larger strategy by answering those questions before installing the app and setting up a brand profile. Objectives keep the brand on target and meet bottom-line expectations.



2. The profile is a call to action.

Think of the profile as [free advertising space](#). Fill it with an easily identifiable avatar. Also, use keywords and, when appropriate, hashtags in the bio.

Use the website link to your advantage, too. This is your only chance to use a URL on Instagram as posts don't allow for live links. You can change it whenever you want, making it a great place to post a link to a new line of merchandise or other information.



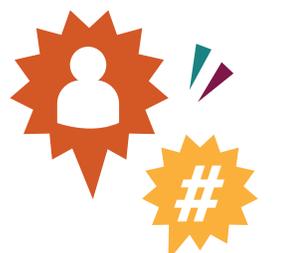
3. Target engagement efforts.

To grow followers fast, search locations, people and hashtags important to your brand. Like photos and leave [personalised comments](#). It pays off. [Click to Tweet!](#) According to [Iconosquare's 2015 Instagram Study](#), 65 percent of respondents would feel flattered or honored if a brand were to like one of their posts. And flattered Instagrammers respond in kind, with brand love. [Click to Tweet!](#)



4. Engage in current trends and breaking news.

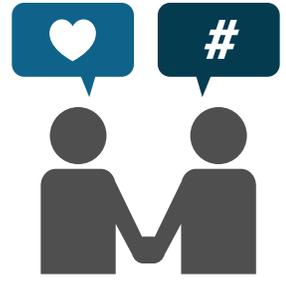
[Monitoring real-time news](#) has gotten infinitely easier with Instagram's improved Search. Now you can search across people, places and hashtags all at the same time. Look for the trends and news relevant to your brand and leverage them.



5. Partner with an event or influencer.

How did [Louis Vuitton](#) generate 286,000 engagements and gain 265,000 followers with only six photos in the first two weeks of June? The answer is found in partnering well and capitalising on Instagram's updated search engine.

The first photo the brand shared was of celebrity Nick Jonas wearing a Louis Vuitton suit at the Tony Awards. It was a triple-hitter effort. The brand employed location, hashtags (#TonyAwards) and people. In turn, Jonas reposted the photo to his own feed and tagged Louis Vuitton. The combination of factors caused traffic and interactions to spike.



6. Get employees to engage socially.

This tactic works regardless of whether your brand is B2B, B2C or a nonprofit. [Employees often are your best advocates.](#)

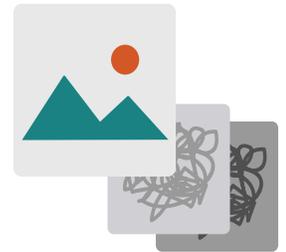
Find out which employees are already active on Instagram. Give them official hashtags and any other resources they need—for example, best practices for tagging, geolocation and social media policies. Then step back and let them do what they do best: tell your story. [Click to Tweet!](#)



7. Use only the best photos.

You can share almost any visual or 15-second video to Instagram and see a small lift in traction. But if you desire a large following and high engagement, focus on [high-quality imagery.](#)

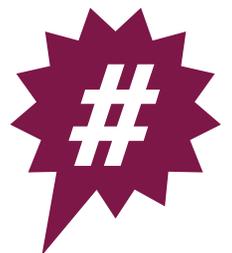
Invest in a tripod to get rid of the “shaky” syndrome; take your time capturing the “just right” photo; and use apps like [VSCO](#) and Instagram's [Layout](#) to easily edit and arrange your images. Do those things, and you'll soon join a long line of “most successful” brands on Instagram.



8. Hashtag your heart out.

[Hashtags](#) remain the most common way to tag and search for subjects on social networks—but it's easy to go a little overboard. Categorise hashtags by essential and complementary.

Make sure essential ones, such as ones tied to a specific PR campaign, are always used and supplement with others as needed. [Iconosquare](#) finds that 53 percent of posts have at least one hashtag; only 20 percent have more than six. Fall within that range, and you should be good to go. [Click to Tweet!](#)



9. It's all about location.

Instagram's updates emphasise [location](#), so it's a best practice to geotag photos. Like your profile, the location tag is free real estate. Use it to your brand's advantage.



10. Ask people to follow you.

If you don't have an existing audience, one way to grow it is through a cross-channel promotion. Ask email subscribers and fans on other social networks to follow the Instagram account. It's a simple thing to do, but it works.



Instagram is growing fast, but you won't be left in the dust with these 10 tips. Use them to grow your presence and turn the network into your brand's most effective social channel yet.