

INSTAGRAM STORIES



Your Instagram Stories Cheat Sheet

Instagram is the second biggest social media on the web and has incredibly high engagement when compared with many of the other options. It also represents an excellent balance of time spent vs potential benefit – it takes just a few minutes to upload a photo but that single post can end up attracting thousands likes and shares and ultimately driving a lot of sales.

In the full ebook, we've discussed how to build a highly success Instagram account and grow it and we've then seen how you can make even *more* of an impression by using the latest Instagram Stories and Live Video features.

This cheat sheet will talk you through the entire process and provide you with a powerful blueprint for Instagram success. It's time to write your own Instagram Success Story!

Creating a Powerful Brand

Instagram is all about selling a 'dream' and a lifestyle; it's about using compelling and emotive images to inspire an audience and to get them to trust your brand and see your products and services as a way to get what they want in life.

Your job then is to make regular, consistent posts featuring inspiring and motivational imagery.

That means you need to pick a niche that you really believe in and create a brand that people can get excited about. You are going to practice what you preach and live the brand, so that you can then promote that lifestyle to your audience every day.

- Try to post an image to Instagram at *least* once a day and keep a large folder of images for days when you have no ideas!
- Use smart tags that people are likely to search for but that won't be immediately drowned by a sea of other posts.

Building a Big Audience

The next step is to grow your Instagram account. To do this you can:

- Like pictures posed by other people and leave comments. Research shows that people are complimented when a brand comments on their post, so do this and you'll find that they will offer check out *your* brand in return and end up liking or following your footage too. Spend 5 minutes a day doing this to gather some momentum.
- Make sure that you use your other channels to promote your Instagram. That means posting your pictures to Twitter and Facebook (you can use IFTTT) and it means mentioning your channel in your posts and in your videos (if you have a YouTube account).
- Engage in influencer marketing! This means that you are going to promote other channels in exchange for them promoting your channel. This way, you can gain exposure to all of their followers (as well as testimony), which is a great way to get a massive boost in followers.
- Never buy followers!
- Don't forget to simply ask your existing followers on other channels to start following you on Instagram. Mention it in your videos if you have a YouTube channel and likewise in your blog posts.

Deliver Quality Content

It is crucial that all your photos be very high quality and 'on message'. This means that you will consistently be posting stellar-looking photos that will promote the lifestyle that you are touting.

This is important not only to keep engagement high for your brand but also to ensure that your visitors want to keep following you!

Another reason this is so important, is that this is the only way you will be able to find sponsors. Note that a sponsor will be seen to be advocating anything you post – so you need to ensure that *all* your content is the kind of content that brands will feel comfortable associating with and that will show them in a good light.

- Stay on message
- Invest in high quality camera and lighting equipment and high quality editing software
- Make your photos visually interesting
- Tell a story in order to engage the viewer. Think about what the elements you leave *out* of your photos are saying about your brand.
- Think about lighting. The best lighting will highlight your subject from one side, casting more interesting and dynamic shadows.
- Don't take boring photos! Try to avoid head on photos of your subjects in the middle of the shot. Frame your photos interestingly, use dynamic camera angles and include elements in the foreground, middleground and background.

Use Instagram Stories

Instagram Stories is a new feature that lets you add content that will only be visible for 24 hours before disappearing. This is a great way to engage your visitors and to make them feel like you're speaking with them directly. It also means that you can post more off-topic content that you wouldn't want to appear on your main photo grid.

Instagram stories should be things that feel more personal and direct and that will let you communicate directly with your audience. This is ideal if you have a 'personal brand' and it also works very well for events and short-term promotions.

Live Videos and Boomerangs

Two more awesome tools that Instagram has introduced are Instagram Live Videos and Boomerangs.

- Live videos are videos that are... well, *live*. Viewers can watch as long as you are streaming and will be notified each time you start recording. They can then leave comments on your videos, allowing you to react in-person. Again, this is a fantastic way to increase engagement and trust because now your audience will really feel as though they have a direct line of communication with you. This will let you answer questions about products too and get feedback about your brand.
- Boomerangs are short videos that repeat on a loop and that act like Gifs. These will appear in your stories and they can be used to great effect if you want to show off something dynamic or humorous.

Do all this and you will find that you gradually gain more and more viewers while also increasing your trust and authority with those followers. Then you can make money through a sponsor or by promoting your own products and services!