

Instagram for Business



Instagram for Business



Instagram is a mobile photo-sharing app and social network created in 2010 by founders Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. In 2012, Facebook purchased the service for \$1 billion. According to Instagram, the social platform has more than 300 million daily active users and 500 million monthly users.

Instagram is photo- and video-centric, so users can edit and post images and short videos, record Instagram [stories](#), and go live with video.

How does Instagram work?

Creating your account

Although it can be viewed on a desktop, Instagram is primarily a mobile app, so you have to download it before you can sign up for an account. Instagram is free in both the [Apple App Store](#) and the [Google Play store](#).

To sign up, you can either connect your Instagram account to Facebook or enter your email. Signing up with Facebook fills information in for you, including your name and profile picture, but you'll still be prompted to create a username and password.

You will likely want to convert your brand's Instagram to a "business account" to receive access to analytics and insights. To do this, you'll need to connect the account with your business's Facebook page by following the in-app prompts from the "Switch to Business Profile" option (in Settings).

Instagram for Business

Once your Instagram account is created, you can go to the Profile tab (the button on the bottom right of your screen) and tap the Edit Your Profile button to change your name, username and profile picture, or to add a website and a short biography (150 characters max.).

To change the app's settings, tap the gear button on the top-right corner. From there, you can also view the posts you have liked, find people to follow, toggle the Private Account option, access Instagram's support options, clear your search history and log out.

Editor's note: If you're looking for information to help you with social media management, use the questionnaire below to have our sister site provide you with information from a variety of vendors for free.

Navigating the app

Navigating the Instagram app is fairly simple. When you open the app, you'll be taken to the home page. Here, you'll see an endless stream of posts from all of the users you follow, sponsored posts based on your interests, and your own posts, if you've added any.

Across the bottom of the app, you'll see five buttons: the Home tab, a Search tab, an add (camera) button (where you can add a new photo from your gallery, take a photo and take video), a heart tab (where you can see who liked your posts) and your Profile tab.

The Search tab helps you find interesting content and new users to follow. Using the search bar, you can look for certain content, users or hashtags. If you don't tap a category (People, Tags or Places), the app defaults to Top, which shows the most popular results for that search term.

Instagram for Business

You will also see a horizontally scrolling row of photos called Trending Tags and, below that, a feed of popular posts, called Explore Posts. These features are great ways to find other people and brands whose interests align with yours, and following users with similar content may even earn you some followers, too.

On the activity page (heart tab), you'll see two tabs at the top of the page: Following and You. The You tab is the default, where you can see recent notifications showing who has followed you or liked your photos, comments other users have left on your photos or mentioned you in, and posts you've been tagged in. When you switch to the Following tab, you'll see recent activity from the users you're following — other photos they've liked or commented on, and users they've followed.

Your Profile tab is where you can see all of your posts, edit your profile and update your settings. Under your user bio, you can navigate your content by four different views: a thumbnail collage of your most recent posts (the default view), a full-size photo stream, your photo map (if you use geotagging on your posts) and a collage of photos in which other users have tagged you. [See Related Story: [10 Instagram Marketing Mistakes You Need to Stop Making](#)]

Creating content

Instagram allows users to post photos and videos to their Instagram feed, as well as temporary Instagram "stories" and live videos.

Adding photos

To post a new photo, tap the add (camera) button on the bottom of your screen. This will open your phone's camera, and you can choose either to take a new photo or video, or select one from your camera roll.

Upon clicking Next, you'll be taken to a screen with multiple options, including Instagram's filters and an Edit button, which will allow you to adjust the photo by changing the brightness, contrast, structure, warmth, saturation, color, fade, highlights and shadows. You can also add a vignette or tilt-shift the picture.

Instagram for Business

Once you've edited the photo to your liking, click Next. This gives you two options: You can post the photo to your public feed or send it directly to a friend (or friends).

If you choose to make it public, write a caption to describe the picture, add a location to geotag it, tag people and share it on multiple platforms. You have the option to turn off comments, found at the bottom of the Advanced Settings page.

If you choose to send the picture directly to someone else, simply compose a caption and send it to one or multiple friends.

Before posting public photos, business owners should consider adding hashtags to their picture for optimal exposure (more on hashtagging later). For example, pictures of dogs often have #DogsofInstagram, while pictures of food may be tagged #Food. Instagram users often search through these hashtags to peruse photos (and videos) that fit their particular interests. Careful **hashtagging** has the potential to bring in more followers and interest in your business.

If you want to change or add something after you've published a post, tap the ellipses (...) button on that post and select Edit to update the caption or add a location or tags. You can also share the post on other social networks, or delete the post if you're unhappy with it.

Instagram stories

New to the Instagram platform are disappearing pieces of content, including photos and video. These capabilities include **Instagram Stories**, posts that disappear after 24 hours.

At the top of your home page is a horizontal bar featuring photos of people you follow and one for yourself that has your profile photo with a plus sign. When you select the photo of yourself, it opens another screen, with the option of live video, an option called Normal (which takes a photo), Boomerang (which creates a GIF) and Hands-Free, which records a video without requiring you to

Instagram for Business

You also have the option to draw on the photo or video with the pen icon on the top right, add stickers with the sticky-note icon, or add text with the "Aa" icon. To add more content to your story, click the camera icon located on the top left.

These features are very similar to those on Snapchat, so if you're familiar with that platform, it should make it much easier to navigate the extra features on Instagram.

Instagram video

In addition to Instagram Stories, users can take and stream live video that disappears — sort of like a combination between Facebook Live and Snapchat. You can give customers a live look behind the scenes of interesting aspects of your business (or answer live questions through the comments). Once the video has ended, it is no longer available anywhere, which sets it apart from Facebook.

If you're looking to take video that remains on your Instagram feed, you can upload video you've taken or take video directly through the app to post. If you choose to take or upload video, you can still add filters and change the cover. You also have the option of whether to include sound.

Web access

Instagram is accessible on the web via [Instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com), but it has very limited functions. You can log in, view your timeline and profile as well as other users' profiles, and like/comment on photos. You can't, however, edit and share photos, or use the search function. You can edit your profile and settings, but you can't change your profile photo unless you're on the mobile app. You also cannot view your followers or following list on the Web.

Interacting with other Instagram users

There are many ways to interact with other users on Instagram. For instance, you can tag other users in your photos, or privately message people.

Instagram for Business

- **Liking:** Liking is a simple way to connect with other users. To like a photo, either double-tap the image or tap the heart button under the post. To view photos you've liked, go to your profile, press the gear button on the top-right corner and select Posts You've Liked.
- **Commenting:** Another simple way to connect with other users is to comment on photos. Next to the Like button is a Comment button — just tap it, and the app will take you to the Comments page for that photo, with a text box where you can enter what you want to say and hit Send when it's complete.
- **Mentioning:** As on Twitter, you can use the @ symbol to tag other users in your Instagram comments or post captions. When you type the @ symbol, followed by the first letter of a person's username, it will bring up a list of people to select from; or, you can simply finish typing out the person's username on your own. If you want to reply to another user's comment, you need to tag the person this way, or else that user won't get a notification.
- **Tagging:** Just as you can tag other users in your photos on Facebook, Instagram allows you to add tags before you post an image or video. To do so, tap the Tag People option before sharing your photo, and then tap where in the photo you'd like to add a tag. The app will then prompt you to type in the person's name to search for his or her account. Once you've tagged other users in your photo and shared the image, other users can tap on the photo to see the people who are tagged.

Direct messaging:

To access Instagram Direct, go to the home page and tap the button in the top-right corner. Here, you can send private instant messages, photos and videos to other users. To send a new direct message (DM), tap the "+" button in the top-right corner, and select Send Photo or Video, or Send Message. Once you've sent the message, you and the recipients can message back and forth. Users who are not already following you will be asked whether they want to allow you to send them photos and videos before they can view your direct message.

Instagram for Business

Editor's note: If you're looking for information to help you with social media management, use the questionnaire below to have our sister site provide you with information from a variety of vendors for free.

Hashtags on Instagram

Using hashtags is a great way to help other users find your content on Instagram, just like on Twitter. Hashtags can include letters and numbers, but they can't contain any non-numerical symbols (#DaveAndBusters might work as a hashtag, but #Dave&Busters does not, for example.)

Because users can both search for hashtags and click on hashtags they see in posts in the app, using relevant hashtags can be a highly effective tool for getting noticed. However, just like on Twitter, you have to make sure you're using the right hashtags for your brand — and that you don't go overboard.

Hashtags such as #nofilter (a photo that hasn't been heavily edited with filters added), #selfie (a picture of yourself) and #tbt or #throwbackthursday (old photos) are all incredibly popular on Instagram, but they may not work for you or your brand. It's a good idea to look at other established brands (or even personal users and bloggers) in your industry for examples of what to do when it comes to hashtags.

Instagram allows a maximum of 30 hashtags in a post or comment, but using that many would be excessive. The fewer hashtags you can use to get quality responses, the better. Using a lot of popular hashtags might earn you a lot of likes from other users, but it probably won't increase your following all that much, and the interactions you get will likely not be from people who are interested in your brand, but rather those who just saw and liked your image.

Geotagging on Instagram

Instagram for Business

Instagram allows you to add your location to your photos when you post them, and if you use this feature, the service will create a photo map of your posts. This shows you, on a map, where all of your photos have been taken, so this is especially useful if your business is related to travel or if you travel a lot in relation to your brand.

Adding your location to your photos displays that location above your photo in each post that has been geotagged. People can click on geotagged locations and see all of the posts in that area, so this can be another great way to gain followers and interactions. And if your building or office is a place that is open to customers, you can add your location so they know where to find you. Followers who live or work nearby may be more likely to interact with you or do business with you if they see that you're nearby.

You can toggle your location on and off before you post an image. This comes in handy if, for example, you want certain posts to be added to your map but want others to be left off. You can also search for nearby locations, like restaurants, tourist attractions and other businesses.

Advertising on Instagram

As on other social channels, businesses have the option to advertise on Instagram. There are three different formats for advertising:

- **Photo Ads:** These look like regular photo posts, but they have a Sponsored label above the photo. They also have a Learn More button in the bottom-right corner, under the photo.
- **Video Ads:** Like the photo ads, these look like regular video posts, but with a Sponsored label on top.
- **Carousel Ads:** These ads look identical to photo ads but feature multiple photos that users can swipe through.

Instagram for Business

All three ad formats appear in users' home feeds while they scroll through the app. These ads support four different objectives: video views, clicks through to your website, mobile-app installations, and mass awareness.

For more information on advertising on Instagram, go [here](#).

Instagram strategies

Not sure how you can use Instagram for your business? Try some of these cool strategies:

Show off your products or services. Take pictures of cool new products as you get them in, or share pictures of your most popular products. Or, if you run a service business, like a hair salon or a restaurant, take the time to take photos of your work.

Go behind the scenes. Take pictures and videos to show how your products or goods are made, especially if the process is unique or interesting, or something your customers ask about often. This will not only provide interesting content for your Instagram account, but will also show your customers and followers exactly what goes on in the background.

Include your employees. Make your brand's Instagram page more personal by including your employees in your posts. Share pictures of your team members hard at work or having fun at company outings.

Ask your customers to show off their photos. Put your Instagram handle and custom hashtags on your products or promotional materials to encourage customers to tag you when they share photos of your product, service or work. This way, other users who want to know where it came from can find you easily. Just make sure you're checking them out, liking them and commenting on them, so they continue to do so.

Instagram for Business

Post exclusive deals on your Instagram. Give back to your Instagram followers by offering them discounts for following you. Share an image with instructions on how to use the deal — for example, you can create a coupon code for use at your business online, or ask users (when they're paying for a product or service) to show they follow you. This will make your followers feel special, and likely get them telling their friends about your business, too.

Instagram tips and tricks

To get the most out of your Instagram account, keep these tips in mind:

Links don't work in Instagram captions. The only place you can share a working link that actually takes users to a website is in your profile (or through a button on a sponsored post). Links don't work in captions or photo comments, so if you're trying to direct people to a specific web page, you can change the default link in your bio to that particular page and note in the caption that the link is on your profile.

Make sure your posts relate to your brand. It can be tempting to share photos of food, fashion and animals because they're so popular on the platform, but if your business has nothing to do with those things, this could make your social marketing look disjointed and could confuse your followers. However, if you can find a way to incorporate pictures like these while still making them relevant to your business, it could make your social marketing strategy more successful.

Run giveaways and promotions. Post an image advertising your giveaway, sale or contest and asking users to repost that image with a specific, custom hashtag in order to enter. You can then search that hashtag to see who has reposted it and pick a winner. Promotions like this allow your customers and followers to market your brand for you by talking about your promotion on their personal pages, and it will drive more people to visit your profile.

Instagram for Business

Respond to other users' comments. When people comment on your photos, reply to them. Interacting with your customers and followers will show them that you are paying attention and that you care about whether they see your photos and what they have to say. They'll be more likely to continue following you and interacting with your pictures if they feel like they matter.

Embed Instagram posts on your website. From the desktop version of Instagram, you can get an embed code to add specific images and videos to your company's website. This can show visitors that you're active on Instagram and help you gain more followers. Just select the photo you want to embed, click the ellipses button in the bottom-right corner and select Embed. This will pull up a box with the embed code and give you the option of whether to show the caption. From there, just copy and paste the code where you want it to go on your website.