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## INSTAGRAM GUIDE



for Tourism Companies

# **An Instagram Guide for Tourism Companies**

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# Content

<b>Editor's Note</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Chapter 1: How to use Instagram to market tourism products</b>	<b>6</b>
• Upload great content	6
• Show off your team on Instagram	7
• Don't try and be too clever	7
• Use the right hashtag	8
• Have your own hashtag	8
• Don't limit yourself to mobile-only photography	9
• Use video content	9
• Be consistent in your posting	10
• Don't give up	10
<b>Chapter 2: Strategies to drive engagement on Instagram as a tourism company</b>	<b>11</b>
• Think about the description	11
• Follow relevant people	12
• Have a theme	12
• Promote your photos and accounts elsewhere	13
• Look at the right analytics	13
• Leverage user generated content	14
• Engage with your followers	14
• Have a link in your email signature	15
• Run contests	15
<b>Recommended</b>	<b>16</b>



# Editor's Note

Instagram is playing a tremendous role in the rising importance of visual content marketing for tourism companies. As the largest photo sharing app, Instagram has 400 million monthly active users and much wider business implications than a place to share photos of pretty sunsets and desserts. For the tourism industry, it can be one of the most convenient ways to drive bookings and boost destination marketing, especially when appealing to younger travellers.

Instagram is particularly - although not exclusively - popular with younger travellers, with 97% of millennials sharing pictures on social media while travelling (Frederic Gonzalo). Instagram adoption also continues to climb amongst Gen Zs (born from late 1990s) while Facebook is on a steady decline (Sparks & Honey).

If your customers are on Instagram, you should be too. Here's our guide on getting started with the social network and successfully building your following and engagement to get results.

The advice in this ebook has been contributed by Colm Hanratty, social media guru and former Hostelworld.com Content and Social Media Manager. Stay in touch with us @TrekSoft and @ColmHanratty. If you have any further suggestions, queries or feedback, email me at [lucy@trekksoft.com](mailto:lucy@trekksoft.com) and I'll get back to you as soon as possible.

Happy reading!



Lucy Fuggle

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# How to use Instagram to market tourism products



Instagram has 400 million monthly active users, which is 80 million more than Twitter's 320 million. This means one thing – if your business is a consumer facing one you need to be on it.

If you're reading this ebook, chances are you own, work for or manage a tour or activity company. This means your business should be on Instagram. If it is, great. If it isn't, get on it. Follow this ebook's tips and you'll see your engagement soaring in no time.

# #1

## **Upload great content (and not just for the sake of it)**

As a rule of thumb, I advise businesses looking to leverage the power of Instagram to share one image per day, but only if it's good content. There's no point sharing an image just for the sake of it. When you work in tourism and are faced with beautiful sights every day, sourcing imagery that will stand out from the crowd becomes far easier than in other industries.



# #2

## **Show off your team on Instagram**

Social media enables brands to show the faces behind what are otherwise faceless organisations. Instagram is a great platform to do this. As pretty as some of the sights you might encounter on your tour or activity are, make sure to show the people that are showing them off too.

# #3

## **Don't try and be too clever**

One of my favourite things about Instagram is that it's very simple – there are no flashy apps, no links and no sharing. It's simply just sharing photos, commenting and liking. Some brands do try and get links in here and there, but most of them unsuccessfully. My advice is don't try to be too clever with it. Take advantage of its simplicity.



## **App Recommendation - WORD SWAG**

In case you still want to create something flashier, Word Swag is your go-to app. In an age where the text on the photo is almost as important as the accompanying description, having an app that enables you to add text to your photos is pivotal. This one for iOS is extremely easy to use and can make almost any photo stand out.



## #4

**Use the right hashtags**

Hashtags play a major role in growing your following on Instagram – more than any other social network in fact. Add multiple hashtags to daily photos and you'll soon see your following grow. Mix your hashtags between generic ones such as #bestoftheday and #travel along with ones more specific to your product and location. But don't abuse hashtags. Tags such as #likeforlike and #teamfollowback might get you the odd extra like, but they won't be quality ones. But use hashtags such as #landscapes, #mountains and #mountainbiking and you'll soon see you are growing the right type of audience.

## #5

**Have your own hashtag**

Every consumer-facing business should have its own hashtag for many reasons. One of them is that, on Instagram, it lets you organise all your photos into the one virtual folder. Another is branding – once you have your own hashtag you can give it to others, meaning your business has the potential to be brought to a new audience through your customers' social channels.

**App Recommendation - INSTAGRAM**

Hashtags are extremely important when it comes to Instagram. Whereas it's seen as a bit desperate if you laden your tweets with hashtags on Twitter, on Instagram it's common practice to have between five to ten of them with each photo. Instagag app tells you the most popular hashtags, then allows you to choose which ones you want to add to your photo.



## #6

**Don't limit yourself to mobile-only photography**

Just because Instagram is mobile-only, it doesn't mean all the photos you share have to be taken by your mobile. If you've got great shots taken with an SLR, share them. Email them to yourself, check your email on your phone and save them to your camera roll. Then upload them and share them on Instagram.

## #7

**Use video content**

Instagram offers video as well as images. Take advantage of this technology. Video your customers, your staff, your views... whatever will make engaging content. It will give customers even more of an insight into what they can expect by purchasing your product.

Streaming video will account for more than two-thirds of all consumer Internet traffic by 2017 (Cisco, 2015). There's a reason for that – it makes content easy to consume and it's engaging. If you want to drive engagement on Instagram in 2016, then make sure to jump on the video bandwagon.

**App Recommendation - FLIPAGRAM**

Want to see your favourite Instagram photos in video format? Flipagram is a free app that allows you to create, share and discover photo-video stories. Not only that, it allows you to add your favourite songs too.



## #8

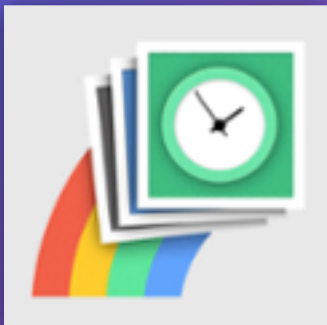
**Be consistent in your posting**

If you've decided Instagram should be a major part of your digital marketing strategy (which it should be), then make sure to be consistent. Share photos regularly, use the same well-chosen hashtags regularly and you'll soon see your following grow.

## #9

**Don't give up**

Don't be disillusioned – you won't grow your following from 1 to 1,000 overnight. But commit to taking 10 minutes out of your day to share one photo to Instagram and you'll see your follower number get bigger. As a result, more people will discover your tour or activity and you'll subsequently see more bookings.

**App Recommendation - SCHEDUGRAM**

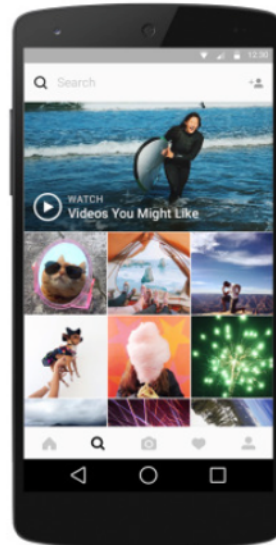
Something that's key when it comes to Instagram marketing is continuity. There's no point sharing photos one week and not the other. To ensure you have a steady stream of photos on your channel, you need to plan a little. This online tool allows you to do that as it posts the content for you.





# Strategies to drive engagement on Instagram as a tourism company

Every week I see more and more brands posting on Instagram, but that is only half the job. The other part is maintaining an engaged audience. Here are the most simple and effective ways to drive engagement on Instagram.



# #1

## Think about the description

While a picture tells a thousand words, the right words can help tell that story even more effectively. So even if you have an image that makes you say 'Wow', don't stop there. Think of a caption that will inspire people and will make them take even more notice of your photo in their feed.



## #2

**Follow relevant people**

Building a following on Instagram, Twitter or any other social network can be easy sometimes – you could simply follow a bunch of people and wait to see which ones will follow you back. But it isn't this straightforward though – you need to follow the right people.

There are different ways to do this. You might want to follow people who follow your competitors. If they like them, they should like you, right? Search for people by hashtag and follow those people. Or you might want to follow people because of where they've shared images. All are relevant tactics.

## #3

**Have a theme**

Having a theme on Instagram is important. It will mean you'll share content regularly and it will give you focus. It could be landscape photos or maybe it's street art. Whatever it is, choose one and stick to it. This way people who follow you will know what to expect when you share photos. If they know what they're getting, you can expect (or hope!) that they will like your posts, thus increasing engagement on your page.

**App Recommendation - INSTASIZE**

While Instagram is made for photos that are a perfect square, sometimes you're doing the photos an injustice by cropping them. If you want the entire photo in all its glory, InstaSize is the app for you.



## #4

**Promote your photos and account elsewhere**

I've publicly stated before on the TrekkSoft blog that you shouldn't tweet your Instagram photos and I stand by this - you simply shouldn't do it. There are other channels to share your Instagram on, namely Facebook and your website. To increase awareness of your Instagram, spread the word about your account in as many places you can. Another reason for having your own hashtag is that, by giving it to your customers, it gives you the opportunity to feed the content from this virtual folder onto your website. Thus, you never have to worry about having fresh content on your website again.

## #5

**Look at the right analytics**

Once upon a time there was a website called Statigram that provided free analytics for Instagram. That website became Iconosquare which provided the same information free of charge. Things have changed, however, and now to see what is the best time to share and what filter generates the most engagement, you'll need to pay \$28.80 USD for 12 months. But this isn't really much to spend when you think about it - I find it worth it.

**App Recommendation - INSTASQUARE**

This online tool lets you see who your top engager is, who unfollowed you, when your followers are online, what your most popular photos are, and much more. If you're taking your Instagram marketing seriously, then this tool is an absolute must.



## #6

**Leverage user generated content**

If a customer shares a piece of content from your tour, take advantage of it and share it! Tweet the photo, share it on Instagram and Facebook it too. Make sure to tag the original publisher for two reasons – to credit them and to trigger some engagement by way of comments, likes and retweets.

## #7

**Engage with your followers**

Posting on Instagram is one thing. Interacting with those who engage with your photos is another. The message here is simple: don't just upload photos and move on. If one of your followers comments on a photo, comment back and engage with their posts.

**App Recommendation - REPOST WIZ**

Sometimes the best content to share isn't your own content – it's somebody else's. You can manually share another user's content on Instagram, but there's a bit of work involved. However, by using Repost Whiz you can instantly 'regram' photos.



## #8

**Have a link in your email signature**

An old but reliable way to grow your Instagram following (or that of any other social network) is by promoting it in your email signature. Think about how many emails you send in a day – that's the number of times you could promote it. It won't generate as many new followers as other methods mentioned here, but it certainly won't deter people.

## #9

**Run contests**

If there's one thing you can be sure of when it comes to social media it's that people like free things. If you give away a free spot on your tour or activity on Instagram you'll see better engagement than ever before. The tagging method is also popular – post a photo asking users to tag the person they'd most want to win the prize with.

**App Recommendation - SNAPSEED**

The mobile version of Google's popular desktop application is the ultimate photo editing software with a really simple and intuitive interface combined with extremely powerful editing capabilities. Snapseed is free and available on iOS and Android.



# Recommended

## [TrekkSoft Vlog](#)

Subscribe to our YouTube channel and enjoy our weekly how-to videos for tour and activity providers on industry trends and ways to adopt them!



## [TrekkSoft Webinars](#)

We regularly host webinars with industry experts to help tour and activity companies build their business, develop their marketing strategy, and drive bookings. Our webinars are always free to attend, join us for the next one!

## [Tourism Success Hub](#)

Join our community on LinkedIn to connect with other successful tourism businesses, share your experiences and develop partnerships. This is also your go-to place to receive our team's expert advice for growing your business.





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