2018 Instagram Report
Engagement

Every Instagram user is looking for more engagement on their posts. According to Later, 81% of businesses see engagement rate as the most important metric for success.

- **Video**
  Video posts receive 2.1x more comments than image posts on average.

- **Video**
  Video posts have the highest overall engagement rate (38% higher than image posts).

- **Comments**
  Instagram comments only make up 1.9% of all engagements.

- **Hashtags**
  Using hashtags does not increase the engagement rate for posts.
From our database of more than 110 million posts, one thing is clear: the average Instagram post receives a lot of likes.

On average, video posts receive the highest number of likes. But the median number of likes for image posts is actually higher. This suggests that the most popular video posts may receive a disproportionate number of likes, skewing the average.

The median number of likes is roughly the same for all post types, suggesting that the type of post is not a key factor in generating likes.
If different post types receive roughly the same number of likes, do we see the same pattern for comments?

This time, the difference is more stark. Clearly, video posts receive a significantly higher number of comments than other post types - more than double that of image posts (on average).
The goal for most businesses is to increase overall engagement rate. Overall engagement is just the total number of likes and comments added together.

Again, video has the highest average engagement rate for Instagram posts. But the median engagement rate for each post type is roughly the same, so the high rates for video are potentially inflated by a small number of very popular posts.
Here are the posts from our sample with the highest engagement rates:

01. @Beyonce — 11M likes
02. @Beyonce — 10M likes
03. @Neymarjr — 6.5M likes
04. @kyliejenner — 4.2M likes
Hashtags

Hashtags on Instagram, as with other social media, are a vital tool to make your posts easier to find. Hashtags group similar posts together, letting users browse images and videos by subject. Because they’re so important, Instagram users are always looking for guidance. How many hashtags should I use? Do more hashtags equal more engagement? Let’s take a look.

—Top tags

"#love" "#instagood" and "#fashion" are the most popular hashtags.

—B2B tags

The top B2B hashtags include "#quotes," "video," "picture," and "work."

—No tags

Exactly 33.3% (1/3) of all posts contain no hashtags at all.

—Engagement

Using hashtags does not increase the engagement rate for posts.
How many hashtags do most people use?

One third of Instagram posts contain no hashtags. We then see a steadily declining number of posts as the number of hashtags goes up. This is logical.

But see that little spike? Instagram limits posts to 30 hashtags. And naturally, plenty of users try to use the maximum number allowed, to increase their posts' visibility.

There is also a workaround that lets you go higher, which is why we still see results up to 60 tags.
Naturally, many people would assume that using Instagram hashtags would help increase engagement. They make your post easier to find, which means more views, and should mean more engagement, right?

Well, no. In fact, we found no clear correlation between the number of hashtags in a post, and the number of engagements (likes and comments).

This is perplexing. The graph suggests that it is actually better to use no hashtags if you want higher engagement. It also contradicts earlier studies which found that hashtags do increase engagements.
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Do more hashtags mean more Instagram engagement?

At a glance, these charts suggest that hashtags actually harm engagement rates. While this is probably a little extreme, we can say with confidence that there is no clear correlation between hashtag use and engagements.

Or perhaps something else is causing this effect. This trend may be because:

- The best content is engaging on its own merit. Hashtags aren't going to help lacklustre Instagram content perform better.
- Power users don't rely on hashtags, and their content gets a lot of likes anyway. This affects our averages.
- People are using the wrong hashtags.

Note: Instagram does not provide data about post views. It's still likely that hashtags make your content easier to find and raises the view count.
One explanation for the previous section could be that people are using the wrong hashtags. It may not be the number of hashtags that matters, but rather using the right ones.

We identified the hashtags with the highest average number of engagements. Here are the top 20. You can see the full database for yourself in this spreadsheet.
Average number of engagements VS Hashtag

- Average number of engagements

### Hashtags
- #1
- #2
- #3
- #4
- #5
- #6
- #7
- #8
- #9

### Values
- 3000
- 2000
- 1000
- 0
- 4000

### Graph
- ad
- comedy
- bts
- meme
- perfect
- dirty
- thedangle
- 1
- funny
- nice
- anime
- video
- football
- wonderful
- lol
- createcommune
- ourplanetdaily
- tumblr
- heatercentral

### Share Graph
Hashtags

Instagram is best known as a platform for fashion, lifestyle, and food content. The network is full of images of makeup and style tips, "outfit of the day" posts, and lots of coffee.

So do the top hashtags on the platform reflect this? Are the most popular tags all about clothes, food, and style?
Number of posts VS Hashtags

Number of posts

Hashtags:
- love
- instagood
- fashion
- photooftheday
- style
- fitness
- picoftheday
- beautiful
- repost
- travel
- art
- beauty
- instadaily
- photography
- ootd
- model
- summer
- happy
- like4like
- follow
Hashtags

Instagram is so popular that hashtags have popped up just about posting on the network itself. These are the top Instagram-specific hashtags.

Top 10 insta-specific hashtags

Hashtags:
- #instagood
- #instadaily
- #instagram
- #instalike
- #igers
- #instafashion
- #instamood
- #travelgram
- #dogsofinsta
- #houseofinsta

Number of posts VS Hashtags

Share Graph
Hashtags

Top 10 food hashtags

Food is a big deal on Instagram, obviously. Whether it's a carefully arranged shot of the perfect açai bowl, or a selfie of someone stuffing their face, people love to share their food.

These are the 10 most popular food-related Instagram hashtags.
Hashtags

Clothes, shoes, and makeup - these are some of the most popular topics on Instagram. Because they're highly visual, subjective ideas, people love to see what others are wearing, to get ideas.

These are the top 10 fashion hashtags on Instagram.
Hashtags

It's not all classic "consumer" products on Instagram. Brands have realized the power of the image platform, and have started experimenting with ways to grow an audience.

These are the 10 most popular hashtags about business.

Top 10 business hashtags

Number of posts VS Hashtags

Number of posts

#1
#2
#3
#4
#5
#6
#7
#8
#9

Share Graph
Tagging users 🙋‍♀️

Another classic strategy to increase Instagram engagement is to tag other users. You might aim to share a post with friends, to tell another user you’ve featured them, or to get the attention of an influencer.

So does this work? Does tagging others increase engagement?

- **Amount**
  72% of posts tag no users.

- **Likes**
  The more users tagged, the more likes a post receives.

- **Comments**
  More tagged users also leads to more comments.

- **Limit**
  Posts can contain up to 20 tagged users, although some have gone beyond this.
Tagging users

72% of Instagram posts contain no tagged users. This is not surprising, perhaps, but it may be a mistake. As we're about to see, tagging users directly increases engagement.

How many hashtags do most people use?

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Tagging users

With every user tagged, the number of likes go up. This increase is basically linear - every user tagged leads to 0.5-1 new like.

We used the median number rather than average in this analysis to minimize the impact of the enormously popular posts from users like Beyoncé and Neymar.
Tagging users

As stated above, the median number is more reliable for tagged users. On average, the best number of tagged users is only 1 (1,675 likes per post). But this is likely affected by a small number of incredibly popular posts.

After 20 users tagged, the numbers fluctuate wildly. This is because the volume of posts plummets, and we see more variance.

There is a limit of 20 users tagged per Instagram post. Of course, a few people have found their way around this limit, and we can see the unpredictable spikes on the map.

Average likes per user tagged

#4

Average likes VS Users tagged

Average likes per post

Users tagged

Average likes

Share Graph
Tagging users

Just as we saw for likes, the more users a person tags in their posts, the more comments the post receives. This is probably obvious - when you tag other users, they're likely to respond. This analysis confirms this suspicion.

Again, we've used the median to remove any noise from posts with unusually high numbers of comments. But the average showed a very similar (although slightly less linear) pattern.

Median comments per user tagged

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Followers

For many users and brands, Instagram is all about the followers. This is also a simple way to identify influencers (although by no means the only factor).

So how does your account stack up?

- **Hashtags in bios**
  Instagram profiles using hashtags in their bios do not have more followers.

- **Micro-influencers**
  2.8% of Instagram users have between 50,000-100,000 followers.

- **Length of bios**
  The length of a user's bio has no effect on the number of followers.

- **Mega-celebrities**
  Our study contained only 56 users with more than 10 million followers.
Followers

Nearly 70% of Instagram users have fewer than 1,000 followers. A further 15.7% have between 1,000-10,000, while 5.7% have 10,000-50,000.

Brands are increasingly turning to micro-influencers - typically users with between 50,000-100,000 followers - to promote products. Those users only make up 2.8% of the Instagram population. So despite not being celebrities, these users are relatively rare.

In fact, all Instagram users with more than 50,000 users make up only 8% of the total pool. So if your business hasn't cracked that magical 50k milestone yet, you're not alone.
Highly Engaging

What does a very successful Instagram post look like? Since we all want more engagement, let's look at what the most engaging posts have in common.

We took the top 15% of posts (based on engagement rate) from our sample. Here are the trends we found.

- **Hashtags**
  Highly engaging posts contain 5.44 hashtags on average.

- **Images**
  Images make up the majority of highly engaging posts.

- **Likes**
  Highly engaging posts receive on average 6,314.42 likes.

- **People tagged**
  These posts tag an average of 1.6 users per post.
Highly Engaging

By far the most common post type among these posts is images. This ratio (85/11/4) almost exactly matches the ratio found for all of the posts in our sample. In other words, image posts are no more or less likely to be engaging than video or carousel posts - there are just more of them.

[Reminder: we saw above that videos may be more likely to attract comments, but the rate of likes is the same. And likes vastly outnumber comments.]
Highly Engaging

We'd expect that the most engaging Instagram posts come mainly from power users. Certainly any post of from a major Insta-celebrity is going to receive attention. So does our top 15% of posts only come from users with the most followers?

In short, yes. There are no posts in our sample from users with fewer than 4,000 followers. And remember, 70% of Instagram users have fewer than 1,000 followers, so already we've eliminated a vast number of users.

But 54% of these posts come from users with between 10,000-50,000 followers. These users only make up 5.2% of our total sample, but they're over-represented here. This clearly shows that micro-influencers can have a huge effect on Instagram, and it makes sense to target them for marketing campaigns.
Highly Engaging

We've said that highly engaging posts are those that make up the top 15% of our study (for engagement). So how much engagement does it take to be in that top 15%?

**Average engagements**

The average number of overall engagements (likes + comments) is **6325.58**

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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum likes</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum likes</td>
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<td>Average likes</td>
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<td>Minimum comments</td>
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<td>5,607,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average comments</td>
<td>111.1581048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Highly Engaging

If we look at the bare minimums, we see that it doesn't take too many likes or comments to make this list. In fact, some of these posts had no comments at all. But a post with no comments needs a very high number of likes (and vice versa).

To appear on this list, the minimum number of engagements (likes + comments) for a post was 1,001. So if a post had zero comments, it needed at least 1,001 likes to be considered highly engaging.
More Statistics

Some more essential Instagram facts and statistics that may influence your marketing strategy for 2018.

- 800 million users
  Instagram has 800 million users, with 500 million using the platform daily.

- 25-34 year olds
  Instagram’s largest user demographic is 25-34 year olds (25.2%)

- Monday, Thursdays
  Mondays and Thursdays are the best for Instagram content, but not between 3-4pm.

- 100% auto brands
  98% of fashion brands and 100% of auto brands use Instagram.

- 1.5 times per day
  Major brands post 1.5 times per day, on average.

- 50% follow business
  50% of Instagram users follow a business.

- More posts = more likes
  The more you post on Instagram, the more likes you get.
The Instagram Engagement Report 2018

As of 2017, Instagram is the second-fastest growing social platform, behind its parent company Facebook. And according to Social Media Examiner, 63% of marketers plan to increase their Instagram use.

Because of this, marketers and Instagram users need more information to support their efforts. We aim to provide this, thanks to our huge database of Instagram data.

—Methodology

Our Instagram database contains more than 110 million posts, from more than 1.7 million users. We analyzed these posts to find trends about engagement rates for different post types, hashtags, bio information, and plenty more.