

Instagram Marketing For Ecommerce: 15 Experts Share Their Tips

by Shabbir - Thursday, July 09, 2015

<http://bootstrappingecommerce.com/instagram-marketing-ecommerce/>



As part of documenting how I am building my new online store, I am trying to experiment with stuff I haven't tried before - one thing that I really want to get a hold on (and you guys should too) is marketing on [Instagram](#). Instagram is HUGE, and I've seen some businesses really kill it on Instagram.

What really appeals to me is the incredibly visual and image-focused nature of Instagram - plus a really neat mobile interface. This makes marketing visual items like apparel and accessories very easy, but Instagram can be used for pretty much everything.

Here are some interesting statistics from [Iconosquare's Instagram case study](#):

- Over 300 million monthly users
- 70% of users have reported looking up a brand on Instagram
- 62% of users follow a brand simply because they like it!

So to help us get into Instagram and start making the best of it, I asked the top creative minds in social media and Instagram marketing how they thought new ecommerce businesses (and established ones, too) could make the best of this amazing platform.

Note: These responses are in no particular order.



Chris Makara - ChrisMakara.com

As with any social media platform, Instagram allows businesses of all sizes a great opportunity to connect with others on a more personable level. Check this out if your business is just [getting started with Instagram](#). With that said, it is key to be as personable as you can on Instagram, and not just another logo.

First you must know your audience. An easy way to do this is by getting a list of your [Instagram followers into Microsoft Excel](#) so you can start filtering their bios. In Excel you will be able to slice and dice the data to see common characteristics among your followers.

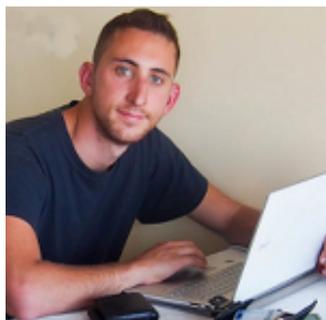
Once you have a better idea of who your audience is, you can really get more personable with your followers.

This can be done with the type of images you post as well as the way you interact with those who leave comments. You'll need to be sure you use imagery they relate to as well as respond to comments in tones that appeal to them.

Sure, you want to be able to make sales for your company, but constantly pushing your followers to buy can very well have a negative effect. Instead of focusing on "salesy" content, why not use imagery that shows how others use your product.

As an ecommerce site, you more than likely sell tangible items. No one wants to see your stale product image. Instead, why not use your product in action. Even better if you can have images of real customers using your products.

Find Chris on Twitter [@ChrisMakara](#)



David Schneider - [NinjaOutreach](#), [Self Made Businessman](#)

I believe the key to getting started on Instagram is the same for many other social media platforms - network with influencers. It is certainly possible to build an audience from scratch but it is difficult. Start by identifying influencers in your niche. Engage with them.

This can be on Instagram itself or on another medium like their website, etc. Get to know them, and then you can begin working with them if you have common goals. This will boost your Instagram presence much quicker than going it alone.

Find David on Twitter [@NinjaOutreach](#)



Neil Patel - [NeilPatel.com](#)

Ecommerce businesses should connect with users who have high follower counts that are engaged and would be potentially interested in their products. Once you have a list of users, I would work out deals where you give them free products in exchange for the promotion of your business.

When doing this make sure you have a lot of Instagram users promoting your ecommerce company at the same time. Making a big splash is much more effective than slowly doing it.

Find Neil on Twitter [@NeilPatel](#)



Richard Lazazzera - [A Better Lemonade Stand](#)

My number one Instagram strategy for getting massive exposure and building a huge audience is to find large Instagram accounts that are already catering to your demographic and pay for sponsored posts on them. It's the cheapest CPM (Cost-per-thousand impressions) of any ad platform right now.

The fact is, there are tens of thousands (if not hundreds of thousands) of Instagram accounts being built solely for the purpose of selling featured shout-outs to companies and brands. Many times, one person runs multiple, sometimes dozens of accounts that have hundreds of thousands of followers in a variety of niches like health, fitness, cars, sports, fashion, nutrition, and a hundred other niches.

Once you find one that targets your ideal demographic and follow them, Instagram will show you "similar accounts". You'll know these accounts accept paid sponsored posts if they have an email address in the bio. Usually it will say something like "For Business Inquires" as well.

From there, it's as simple as emailing them, telling them (briefly) about your brand/company (the smart ones are also looking for a good fit) and asking for their sponsored post pricing.

Once you strike a deal with the account, make sure you review their past posts to see what type/style of photos receive the most engagement and consider this when you're creating your ad image/copy.

Your best bet is to link back to your Instagram account, instead of trying to send the users directly to your website since Instagram doesn't allow linking in comments.

Using this tactic makes it easy to gain thousands or tens of thousands of new followers in your target demographic overnight. The key now is cultivating these new followers with great content that appeals to them and slowly introducing them to your brand.

Find Richard on Twitter [@RichardABLS](#)



Melinda Fleming - [Curated Cool](#)

Instagram is a visual medium where a lot of business owners might forget how art and a beautifully laid out IG page is paramount to success. You can't just sell to your audience the entire time, but use a 50/50 rule on inspiration meets selling. Using posts from other people that have used your product and photographed it in a beautiful way, then tagging the person in the post title is great idea. Also creating a custom hashtag for your business is a great marketing tool. hashtags are the new search engines.

Find Melinda on Twitter [@CuratedCool](#) and Instagram [@CuratedCool](#)



Ryan Stewart - [Webris](#)

By far the best option (for any business) is influencer marketing. With no ads available to the greater public, influencer marketing is the only real white hat way to experience explosive growth on Instagram. The concept is simple - do some research, find Instagram users with large followings who post content related to your business / product, follow them, send them an inbox message asking if they would be interested in promoting your product for a price. 99% of them will. This can get a little costly, but it's by far the most powerful method right now.

Find Ryan on Twitter [@Ryanwashere](#)



Ivana Taylor - [DIYMarketers](#)

Instagram is all about getting to know the person behind the business. If you're running an ecommerce store, then allowing your customers to know YOU both personally and professionally will attract more of your ideal customers and increase loyalty. You can use your existing Instagram profile - BUT - this means no embarrassing posts. Encourage your customers to send you photos with your product or engaging with your service. Upload pictures that show people who you are - if you like flowers, add pictures of flowers. Let your customers get into a relationship with you.

Find Ivana on Twitter [@DIYMarketers](#)



Joe Brown - [MediaJunkies](#)

The truth is that digital consumers have the world in the palm of their hands. No matter how many apps there are, no matter how many websites there are, consumers will keep using media that is easily to digest and easy to use.

Too many functions, too many algorithms, too many marketers on social networks make consumers switch platforms as quickly as they join them.

This is why Instagram is a booming network where you only see what your network is posting, where the only thing you need to do is to swipe up and down.

As a marketer that means several crucial things:

1. The attention span is even shorter than on any other network.
2. The life span of a post is shorter than on any other network.
3. You cannot be identified as a marketer or your audience will run away.

The solution is to use Instagram as a visual story teller who shares content that actually matters to people. This is a massive opportunity for everyone who is keen to build a brand with real people who are really interested in what you have to say and to show.

The future will hold how Instagram can help driving brands. The announcement of Instagram ads and the possibility of an in-build 'Shop Now' button make Instagram an exciting space to watch.

Find Joe on Twitter [@MediaJunkies AU](#)



John Jantsch - [Duct Tape Marketing](#)

Ecommerce has really been able to take Instagram by the horns and run with it. Not only is it a great way to showcase your product for free, but you can interact with and form a relationship with your fans. Utilizing hashtags, contests, and purchasing directly in Instagram can help your fan base grow from your local neighborhood to a worldwide ecommerce site. Be interesting and engage.

Find John on Twitter [@Ducttape](#)



Asia Zukowska - Colibri.io

1. Post images which engage your potential customers - See what's interesting for your potential customers. Start by checking the most popular hashtags on Tagsforlike.com
2. Create your own hashtag & encourage to use it – Check out [how simple it is](#)
3. Connect Facebook & Twitter - you can post straight to Facebook/Twitter and Tumblr when uploading any image to Instagram
4. Invite friends - Instagram allows you to find friends that already exist across yours social networks
5. Run contests for your Followers – Select a unique hashtag for your competition and check its effects and increase engagement with [River](#)
6. Create Instagram only offers - It allows you to attract new followers that are interested in special offers that they wouldn't see anywhere else
7. Ask for engagement from users – You can do this in 2 ways:
 - a) [ask for opinions](#)
 - b) or ask for like and show your post to other people [like here](#)
8. Use Instagram to show off new product - Instagram is the perfect way to sneak product peeks with followers
9. Show Instagram galleries on your site - This is awesome social proof, increasing product exposure on Instagram
10. Partner with Influencers – This is a great way to reach new users

Find Asia on Twitter [@ZukowskaAsia](#)



Aubrey Rose Madrona - [Seo Hacker](#)

Instagram is one of the biggest image heavy social media platforms today; however, many e-commerce sites are unaware of its value. With the right strategy and content. Instagram can help the company increase its reach, engagement, and conversion.

Aside from promoting products to potential buyers from the online store, you can increase engagement with your brand by showing them behind-the-scenes moments through Instagram. By doing this, you will be able to build a strong personal bond with your customers. The platform can also be used for promotional strategies such as online contests using customized hashtags. Just make sure that every post ties back to your e-commerce website by reminding them to click the link on your bio.

Instagram is mobile-friendly and also released a web-based interface that makes it accessible via personal computer, this would mean reaching both mobile users and desktop users.

Find Aubrey on Twitter [@aubiiii](#)



Darren DeMatas - [SelfStartr](#)

I would start by creating a lifestyle persona of your ideal buyer. What do they like to do? How do they use your products? Where will they use your products? Once you nail that down, I would spend a few hours taking lifestyle photographs of your products in action.

Nike posts images of their products, but their page is heavily focused on sport lifestyle images. Research shows that consumers seek comfort and self-expression in the brands they choose.

A lot of new ecommerce sites make the mistake of sharing nothing but their product photos on Instagram. While product photos on a white background are ideal for your store, they are boring on Instagram. If your Instagram page is nothing but a product catalog and sales promotions, you're doing it wrong.

You don't have to hire a professional photographer, either. As long as you have a good camera, photogenic friends and decent lighting you can create images that generate a connection with your target audience. You can also repurpose the images on blog posts, too. A two-hour photo shoot can go a long way.

Contests and promotions are great tactics, but unless you understand your buyer, you'll lose traction quickly. You can't build a brand on discounts.

Find Darren on Twitter [@DarrenDematas](#)



Jock Purtle - [Digital Exits](#)

As a e-commerce business broker having sold many e-commerce businesses we have found that a lot of businesses can be grown up to \$5m per year in sales just from Instagram marketing and community. The main strategies that founders have been using is creating customer loyalty and following on Instagram and then developing products that their customers want.

Some tips on gaining users. Do a promoted page swap where you reach out to an account and get them to promote you as well as you promote them. Another strategy is to pay for sponsored posts where you pay generally between \$50 - \$500 for an account to post about you, your brand or your product on their account.

Find Jock on Twitter [@Jockpurtle](#)



Alex Ditty - [SEEN](#)

Instagram is all about user-generated content. If your goal is to promote your products on the visual network then you need to develop a strategy that encourages and utilizes content from your community. [Incentivizing your customers to share photos of your products with contests and campaigns](#) will create valuable authentic promotion to their followers. [Displaying this content on your website](#) enables you to show your products from your customer's perspective.

Additionally, you can increase awareness of your products by leveraging Instagram influencers like those found in the [Snapfluence](#) network. When you tap influencers who drive engagement with your target customers, they're able to help create awareness for the items you're selling by getting them into the feeds of those customers. Successful Instagram marketing for e-commerce will depend on driving UGC and engaging your community.

Find Alex on Twitter [@SeenMoment](#)



Rodney Hess - [BBR Creative](#)

With Facebook's constantly declining organic reach, Instagram has quickly become *the* social media platform for ecommerce businesses on a budget. Make Instagram a central portion of social media marketing strategy. Offer discounts and promotions for your followers. Create a hashtag that customer's can use to have their images featured on your page. If you're savvy enough, you could have 100% user-generated content on your Instagram page.

The key is to not use the platform as just another means to sell your product. Harness the power of people and create loyal following of brand advocates.

Find Rodney on Twitter [@RodneyHess](#)

In case you'd like a TL;DR version:

- Know your audience
- Find influencers
- Run sponsored posts
- Go big
- Form a relationship with your fans
- Proportion your products/engagement posts
- Use a separate business account!

A big THANK YOU to all the awesome folks who were kind enough to share their expertise!

If you enjoyed this post, please share it!
