

INSTAGRAM MARKETING

2018 Trends & Benchmarks Report



ICONOSQUARE

Instagram & Facebook Analytics and Management Platform

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INTRODUCTION

Like it or not, Instagram is now the place to be for brands and businesses. Ever since Instagram launched in 2010, it became a go-to platform for millions of people – for 800 million people, in fact, out of which, 25 million are businesses¹, building brand awareness, reaching customers, and increasing sales through Instagram.

However, with the increasing potential and growth of Instagram comes new challenges and problems – for example, it's harder to get your content seen and to compete with big names on the platform. At Iconosquare, we believe that in order to succeed, you need more than just tools – you need a strategy. And to build a successful strategy, you need insights, benchmarks, and a solid understanding of trends.

But what are the current Instagram benchmarks? And what are the Instagram trends?

In our first Instagram Trends & Benchmarks Report, we set out to find the answers to these questions. Here, we're taking a look at 2017's most popular Instagram trends, hashtags, posting habits, and more, by analyzing 790 000 Instagram users and 3 706 brands from 9 different industries. Our findings highlight some interesting Instagram trends – some of them were expected, some of them not:

- On average, Instagram users are converting to Business Profiles more and more
- While everybody keeps saying "video is king", photos still get more engagement
- Thursday seems to be the best posting day for all industries
- Carousels are the most geolocated content type on Instagram
- Most popular Instagram filter: none!

Read on for all the findings from our first annual report and consider how your Instagram KPIs compare to your competitors'!

¹ <https://business.instagram.com/a/toolkit>

CHAPTER I

INSTAGRAM USERS: WHO ARE THEY?

TYPICAL INSTAGRAM USER

Typically, an Instagram user has:

156

POSTS

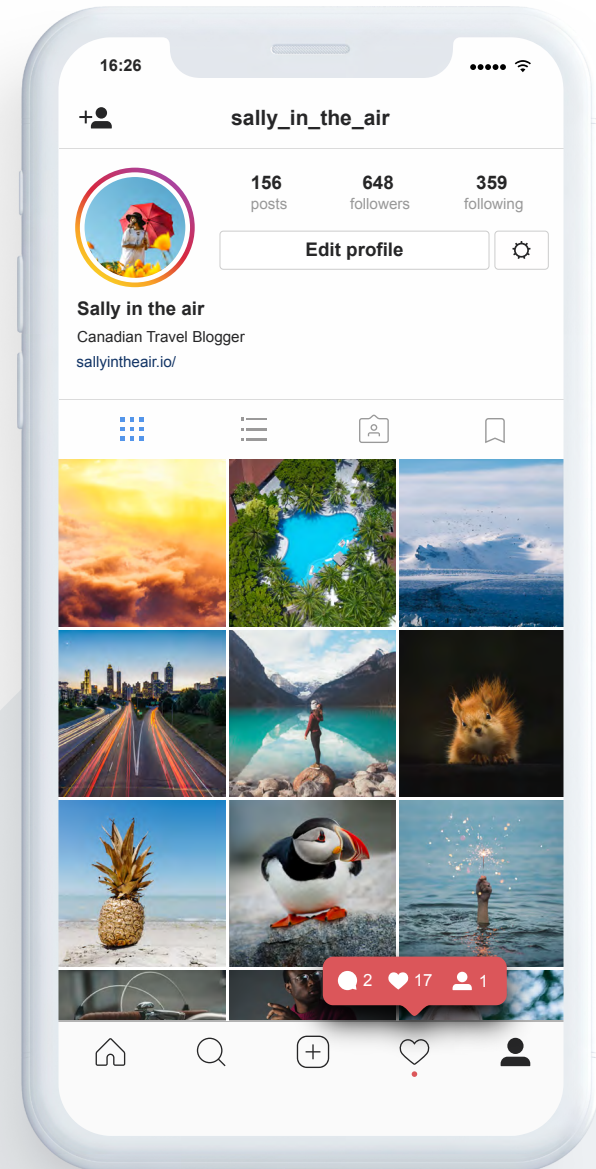
648

FOLLOWERS

359

FOLLOWING

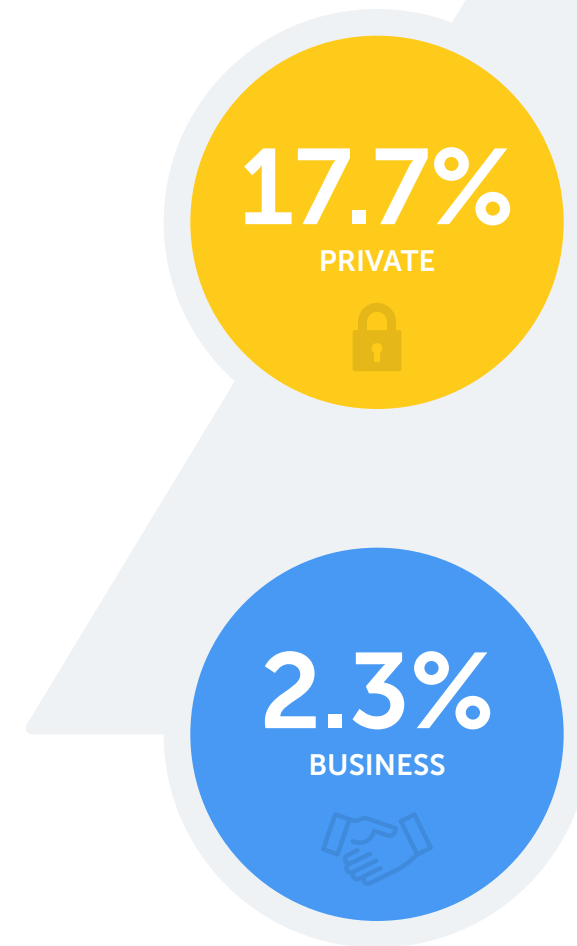
A user on Instagram publishes about **2.5 posts** over the period of 30 days, uses **7 hashtags**, and, as a result, receives around **17 likes** and **2 comments** on a post.



ACCOUNT TYPE

79.98% of all accounts on Instagram are Personal, while **17.7%** are Private and **2.3%** are Business.

The increase in Business profiles has exploded over the past year — in fact, there's been a **66%** increase from July to November 2017². With unique Insights and Ads available for Business profiles, this number is predicted to grow even more in 2018.

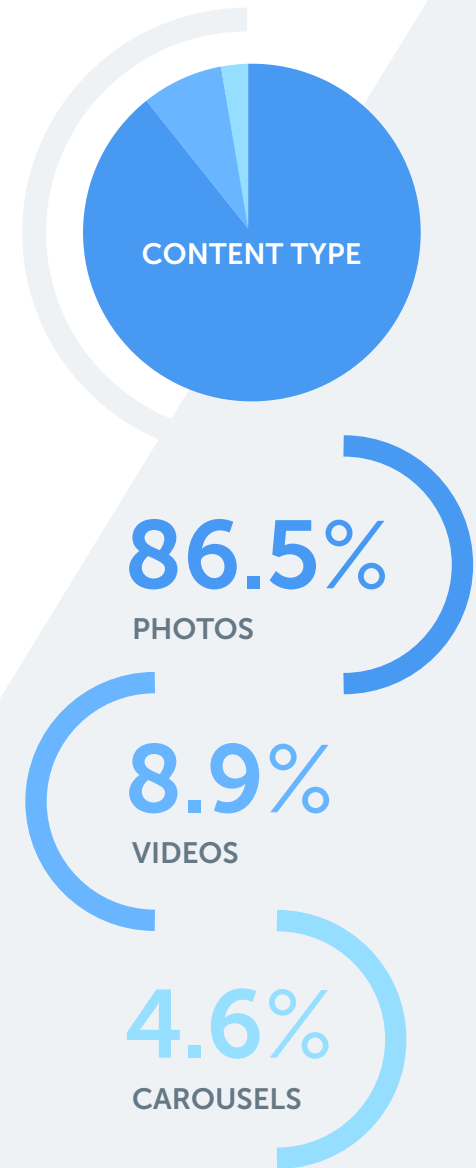


² <https://business.instagram.com/blog/25-million-businesses>

CONTENT TYPE

While videos are becoming bigger and bigger, people still choose to post photos instead. So far, **86.5%** of all content posted on Instagram are single photos, whereas **8.9%** and **4.6%** are videos and carousels respectively.

Stories, however, undoubtedly became the biggest hit in 2017: **Over 300 million** people use Instagram Stories every single day, with **1/3** of the most viewed Stories coming from businesses³.



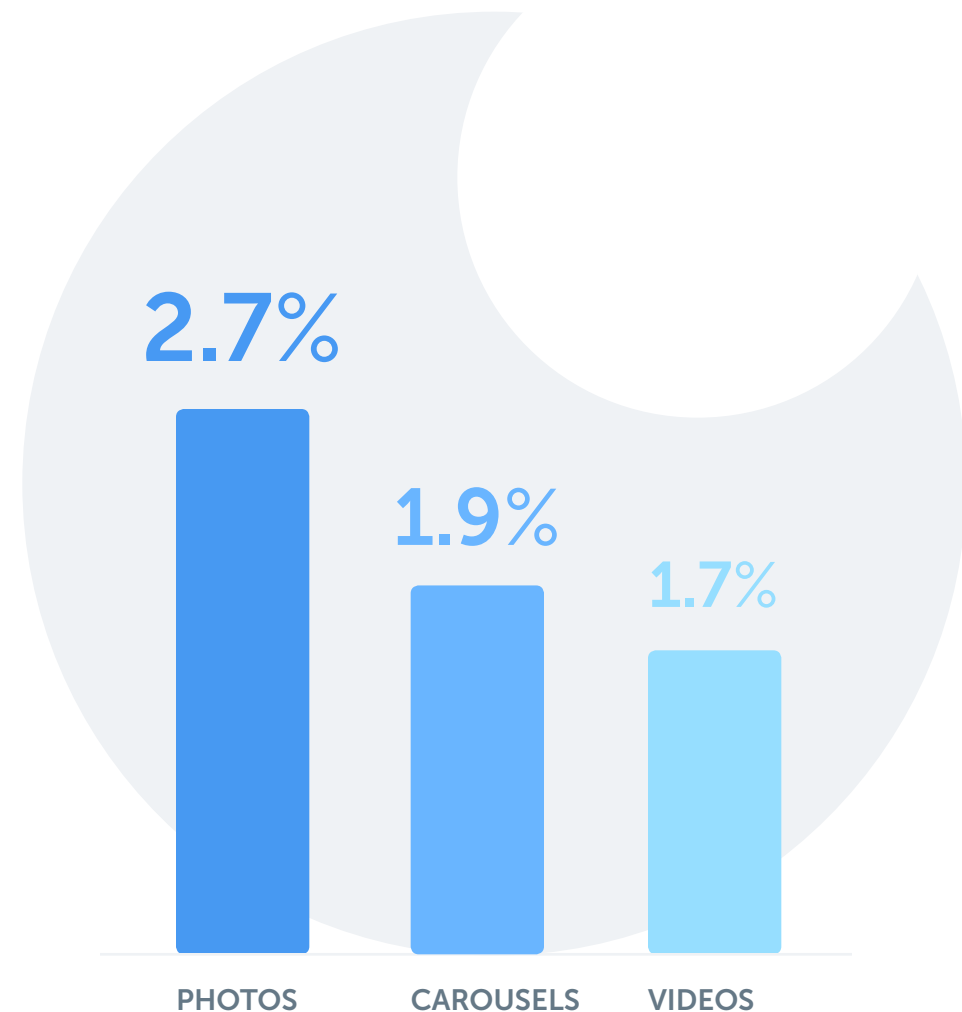
³ <https://business.instagram.com/a/toolkit>

ENGAGEMENT RATE

As for engagement, photos seem to be the most engaging type of content on Instagram, in comparison to videos and carousels.

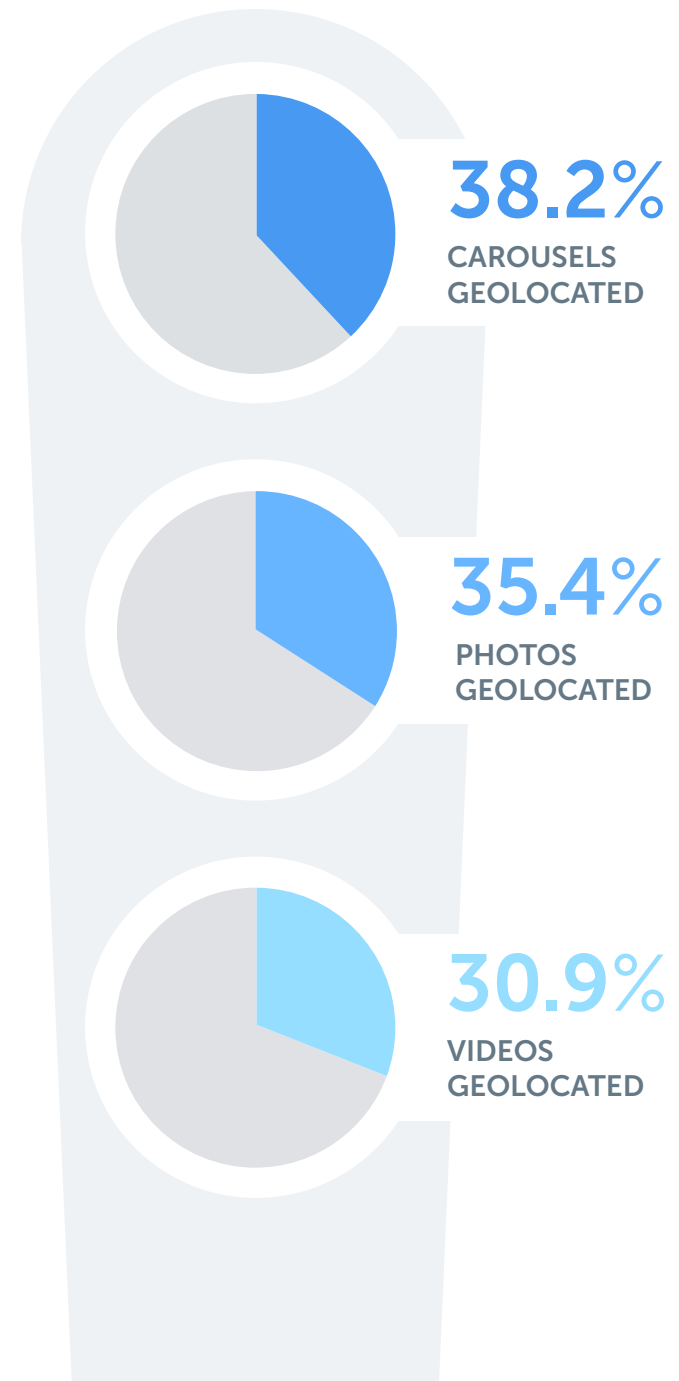
How is engagement rate calculated? Easy: the sum of comments, likes (and, for Business Profiles, also saves) divided by the number of followers. The median engagement rate of a photo post is **2.7%**. For a carousel post, it's **1.9%**, and for video, **1.7%**.

TOP TIP: Try to make your videos more engaging! Learn how to create killer video content on Instagram [here](#).



GEOLOCATION

Geolocation is one of the many content promotion tactics on Instagram, and yet only around **30-40% of users** geolocate their content. **35.4% of Instagram photo posts** have a geotag, with the number of geolocated **carousel posts** being even higher, at **38.2%**. **30.9% of videos** on Instagram are tagged with a geolocation.



MOST INSTAGRAMMED CITIES IN 2017

New York and **Los Angeles** are ultimate winners, as they're the most geolocated destinations for photos, videos and carousels.

	PHOTOS	VIDEOS	CAROUSELS
1	New York	Los Angeles	New York
2	Los Angeles	New York	Los Angeles
3	London	London	Paris
4	Paris	Paris	London
5	Sydney	Toronto	Austin

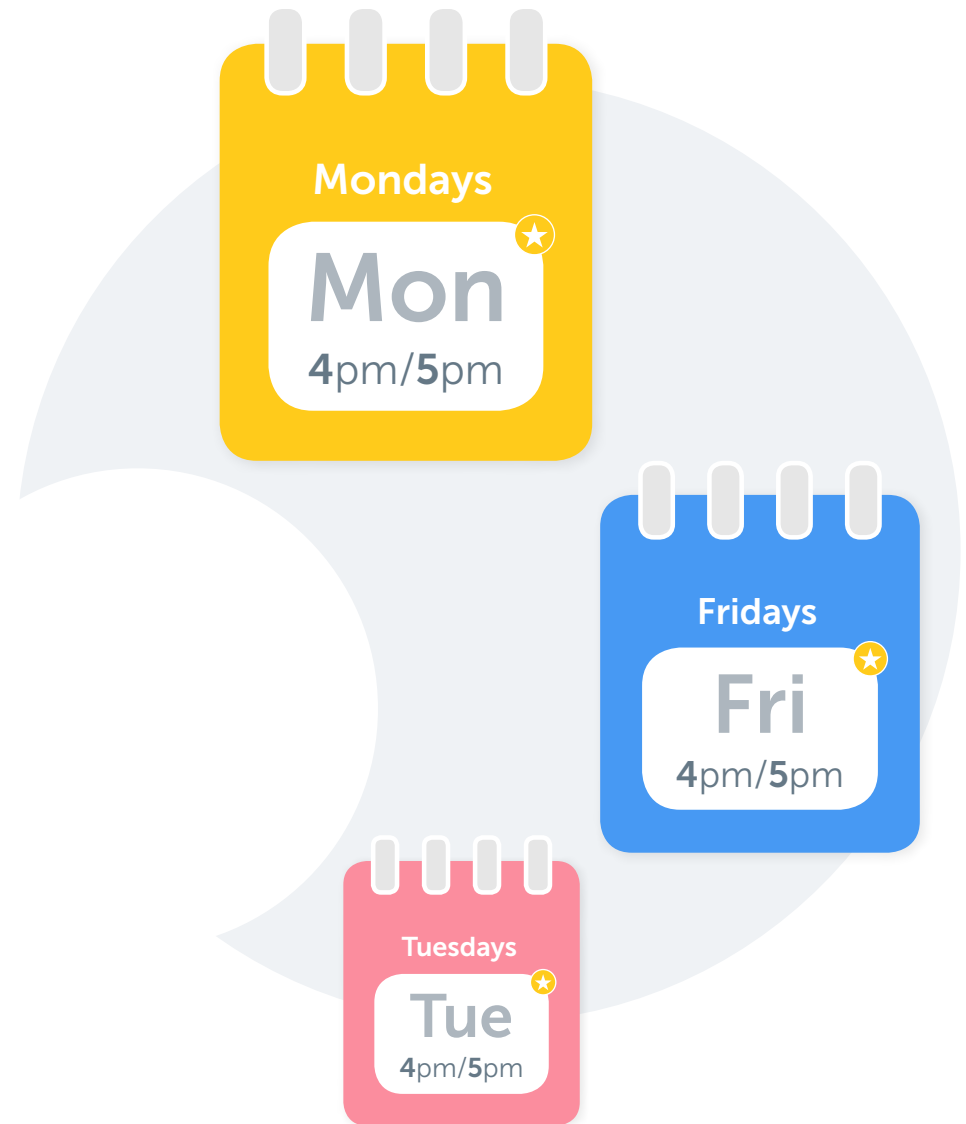


BEST POSTING HABITS

Although the idea of an optimal posting time is viewed as less important since we said goodbye to the chronological feed, it's still helpful to look at when your audience are online and most active when deciding when to post.

As it appears, the most popular days of the week to post are **Mondays, Fridays, and Tuesdays (in this order), between 4pm and 5pm.**

TOP TIP: Figure out the best time to post for your brand. Try a few different days and times to see which get you the most engagement and help you reach your goals.



USE OF HASHTAGS

While it's possible to use up to 30 hashtags per post on Instagram, the average number used is just 7. In December 2017 **Instagram also introduced the ability to follow hashtags**, expanding its discoverability features and offering users a new way to stay connected to the communities they care about.

We can expect this feature to result in a slightly more 'cluttered' feed in 2018, as users will have to scroll through even more content to see posts from the accounts they are following. With the increase in paid advertising, this means organic posts are likely to be buried further down the feeds.

WHAT WERE THE 10 MOST USED INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS IN 2017?

#travel #love #ootd
#fashion
#beauty #style
#instagood
#repost #design
#photooftheday

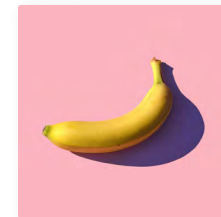
TOP TIP: As the hashtag game gets stronger, now is the time for anybody looking to build community and increase brand awareness to finally get their own branded hashtag.

MOST AND LEAST USED FILTERS

“Normal” was the most popular Instagram filter in 2017, used in 89.5% of cases. This, however, doesn’t mean that users don’t pre-filter their content on editing apps, like VSCO, A Color Story, and others — in fact, pre-editing is the thing to do, and this is unlikely to change in the New Year. As for Instagram native filters, the most used in 2017 is **Clarendon (3%)**, followed by **Juno (0.98%)**, **Ludwig (0.86%)**, **Lark (0.82%)**, **Gingham (0.72%)**, **Lo-fi (0.39%)**, and **Aden (0.29%)**. **Toaster** is officially the least used filter on Instagram in 2017, chosen only in **0.002%** of cases.

“

NO FILTER IS USED **89.5%** OF THE TIME.



Normal



Clarendon



Juno



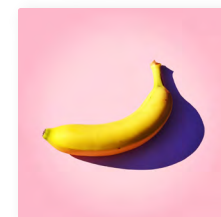
Ludwig



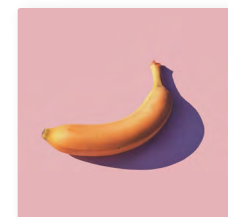
Lark



Gingham



Lo-fi



Aden

CHAPTER II

BRAND OVERVIEW

BRANDS ON INSTAGRAM

This data is based on the [Iconosquare Brand Index](#) and reflects the most popular practices for brands on Instagram, broken down by industry. In total, **we had a look at 3,706 brands, both big and small, from 9 different industries**, which were: Fashion (498), Beauty (308), Sports (497), Food (486), Entertainment (495), Education (148), Celebrities (498), Automotive (209), and Non-Profit (130).

So, let's get stuck in:

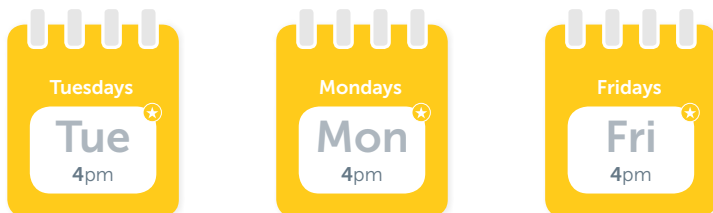
	FASHION	BEAUTY	SPORTS	FOOD	ENTERTAINMENT	EDUCATION	CELEBRITIES	AUTOMOTIVE	TOURISM	NON-PROFIT
AVERAGE ⁵ NUMBER OF MEDIA BY 2017	3 614	1 465	2 876	1 060	4 323	1 070	2 136	1 655	1 363	1 228
AVERAGE FOLLOWERS	2 462 145	655 504	3 882 252	181 400	2 609 284	42 298	9 795 122	728 214	231 324	106 417
AVERAGE FOLLOWINGS	604	872	489	1 275	612	744	519	527	925	819
AVERAGE LIKES PER POST	16 616	4 538	77 992	1 966	32 561	1 523	201 788	10 951	4 287	1 900
AVERAGE COMMENTS PER POST	102	94	714	33	355	13	3 466	42	41	25
AVERAGE FREQUENCY OF POSTING (PER MONTH)	24	17	20	13	23	15	17	19	18	16

⁵ Averages can be higher due to the inclusion of a few very successful, big brands which have high follower numbers and engagement rate.

FASHION

Ultimately, fashion occupies one of the biggest spaces in Instagram's brand arena. The industry is huge, and the numbers speak for themselves. **Fashion brands on Instagram receive approximately 16,616 likes and 102 comments per post from about 850 204 followers.** Fashion brands also post the most frequently: around 24 times in a month.











TOP 3 MOST POPULAR TIMES TO POST



TOP 15 HASHTAGS IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY

#ootd, #regram, #fashion, #tbt, #love, #style, #fw17, #tgif, #nyfw, #linkinbio, #nike, #pfw, #winter, #denim, #shoes

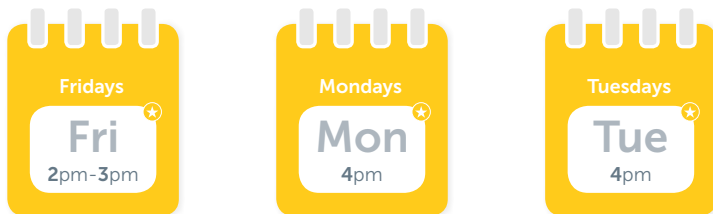
TOP 10 FASHION BRANDS ON INSTAGRAM

RANK	BRAND	FOLLOWERS	ENGAGEMENT RATE
1	 Nike	75.7M	1.20%
2	 Victoria's Secret	58.6M	0.75%
3	 Nike Football (Soccer)	31.2M	2.74%
4	 Chanel	25.9M	0.65%
5	 Adidas Original	24.2M	0.95%
6	 H&M	24.2M	0.73%
7	 Zara Official	24.1M	0.60%
8	 Louis Vuitton Original	21M	0.55%
9	 Gucci	20.7M	0.51%
10	 Dior Official	18.2M	0.54%

BEAUTY

Beauty is one of the key industries thriving on Instagram. Due to the aesthetic nature of Instagram, this makes perfect sense! Based on data from the Iconosquare Index, **beauty brands receive approximately 4,071 likes and 68 comments per post from about 619,502 followers.** On average, beauty brands post around 17 times per month.











TOP 3 MOST POPULAR TIMES TO POST



TOP 15 HASHTAGS IN THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY

#beauty, #makeup, #skincare, #repost, #regram, #hair, #lipstick, #love, #fashion, #cosmetics, #hairecare, #skin, #beautiful, #motd, #crueltyfree

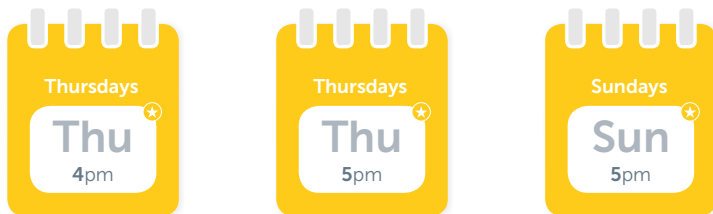
TOP 10 BEAUTY BRANDS ON INSTAGRAM

RANK	BRAND	FOLLOWERS	ENGAGEMENT RATE
1	 MAC Cosmetics	17.6M	0.56%
2	 Anastasia Beverly Hills	15.8M	0.95%
3	 Kylie Cosmetics	15.3M	1.78%
4	 Sephora	13.7M	0.66%
5	 NYX Professional Make Up	12.4M	0.79%
6	 Too Faced Cosmetics	9.8M	1.13%
7	 Urban Decay	9.3M	0.78%
8	 Tarte Cosmetics	7.6M	0.87%
9	 Benefit Cosmetics US	7.5M	1.06%
10	 Maybelline New York	6.2M	0.86%

SPORTS

Are you following a Sports team on Instagram? If so, you're one of many fans eager to keep up to date with your team's posts. **Brands from the Sports industry have a (huge) average of 3,791,431 followers and receive around 74318 likes and 629 comments per posts.** Sports brands post 19 times per month on average.

TOP 3 MOST POPULAR TIMES TO POST



TOP 15 HASHTAGS IN THE SPORTS INDUSTRY

#repost, #tbt, #mondaymotivation, #heretocreate, #love
#throwbackthursday, #football, #training, #ucl, #nike,
#fridayfeeling, #worldcup, #legend, #running, #workout

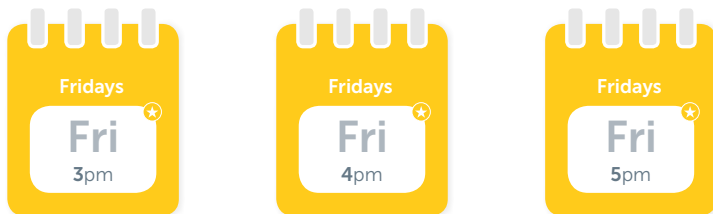
TOP 10 SPORTS BRANDS ON INSTAGRAM

RANK	BRAND	FOLLOWERS	ENGAGEMENT RATE
1	 Nike	75.7M	1.20%
2	 Real Madrid C.F.	55M	1.82%
3	 FC Barcelona	54.5M	1.67%
4	 Nike Football (Soccer)	31.2M	2.74%
5	 NBA	26.5M	1.03%
6	 Adidas Original	24.2M	0.95%
7	 Manchester United	20.6M	1.95%
8	 UCL	19.3M	1.13%
9	 Adidas	18.1M	1.12%
10	 Premier League	15.2M	1.27%

FOOD

Instagram is slowly, but steadily, turning into Yumstagram with **181 400 people on average following a food account**. On the contrary to popular belief, insta-breakfasts and lunch goals aren't actually saturating the Instagram feed as much as we all think: in fact, brands from the food industry publish the least amount of content in comparison to other industries.


TOP 3 MOST POPULAR TIMES TO POST



TOP 15 HASHTAGS IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY

#food, #foodie, #yummy, #delicious, #instafood, #yum, #foodporn, #chocolate, #breakfast, #recipe, #love, #tbt, #weekend, #coffee, #instagood

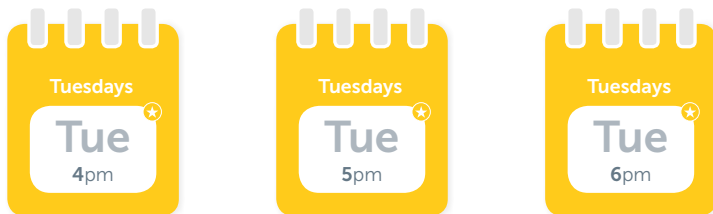
TOP 10 FOOD BRANDS ON INSTAGRAM

RANK	BRAND	FOLLOWERS	ENGAGEMENT RATE
1	 McDonald's	2.9M	1.47%
2	 OREO	2.4M	3.96%
3	 Joe Wicks #Leanin15	2M	0.64%
4	 McDonald's Brasil	1.6M	0.95%
5	 Nutella	1.6M	2.78%
6	 Wilton Cake Decorating	1.5M	1.18%
7	 Burger King	1.4M	1.45%
8	 Pizza Hut	1.3M	1.23%
9	 dunkin donuts	1.3M	2.05%
10	 KFC	1.2M	1.16%

ENTERTAINMENT

Ready to be entertained? On Instagram, the entertainment industry is pretty solid, with accounts receiving **29 009 likes and 355 comments per photo on average**. Entertainment accounts also have quite a dense posting strategy: **23 new posts over the period of 30 days, on average**.


TOP 3 MOST POPULAR TIMES TO POST



TOP 15 HASHTAGS IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

#repost, #tbt, #ad, #regram, #mondaymotivation, #throwbackthursday, #fbf, #flashbackfriday, #sponsored, #gameofthrones, #strangerthings

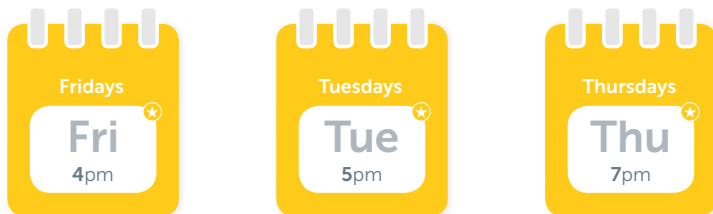
TOP 10 ENTERTAINMENT BRANDS ON INSTAGRAM

RANK	BRAND	FOLLOWERS	ENGAGEMENT RATE
1	 9GAG: Go Fun The World	43.6M	1.90%
2	 Marvel Entertainment	16M	1.38%
3	 WWE	14.2M	0.82%
4	 EA SPORTS FIFA	13.5M	3.18%
5	 Giovanna Ewbank	12.6M	0.93%
6	 Cole Sprouse	11.8M	3.50%
7	 Jimmy Fallon	10.8M	1.55%
8	 PlayStation	9.8M	1.66%
9	 Star Wars	8.8M	1.95%
10	 Pretty Little Liars	7.4M	2.62%

EDUCATION

Big news: schools and universities are big on Instagram, too! Accounts from the education industry might not have too many followers on average (**around 54 376 per account**), but they post regularly (around every second day) and receive quite a decent engagement rate per media posted (**approximately 1455 likes and 9 comments**).











TOP 3 MOST POPULAR TIMES TO POST



TOP 15 HASHTAGS IN THE EDUCATION INDUSTRY

#repost, #autumn, #university, #art, #science, #studentlife, #campus, #sunset, #throwbackthursday, #college, #student #campuslife, #architecture, , #neverforget, #research

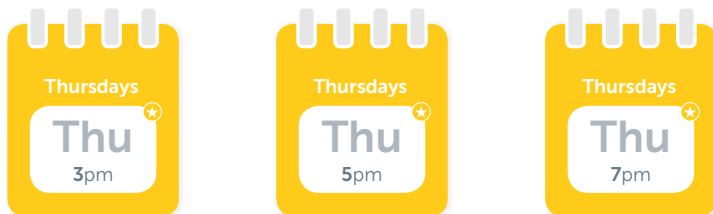
TOP 10 EDUCATION BRANDS ON INSTAGRAM

RANK	BRAND	FOLLOWERS	ENGAGEMENT RATE
1	 Harvard University	672.8k	3.26%
2	 Stanford University	306k	2.84%
3	 University of Cambridge	249.4k	2.51%
4	 ICP	231.2k	1.19%
5	 Yale	187.5k	3.39%
6	 Integrative Nutrition (IIN)	177.2k	0.65%
7	 Texas A&M University	167.3k	4.83%
8	 University of Michigan	156.8k	3.30%
9	 Harvard Medical School	156k	3.26%
10	 Princeton University	147.5k	2.91%

CELEBRITIES

Perhaps unsurprisingly, **'Celebrities'** is the **biggest industry on Instagram**, with an **account boasting 3,792,385 followers on average!** Celebrity accounts receive around 201,788 likes and 3466 comments per post (whaat!), and on average, post 17 times per month. Take a look the impressive number of users following celebs such as Selena Gomez and Beyoncé:











TOP 3 MOST POPULAR TIMES TO POST



TOP 15 HASHTAGS THAT CELEBRITIES USE

#repost, #tbt, #ad, #fbf, #love, #nyc, #heretocreate, #family, #blessed, #mood, #throwbackthursday, #ucl, #london, #bts, #sponsore

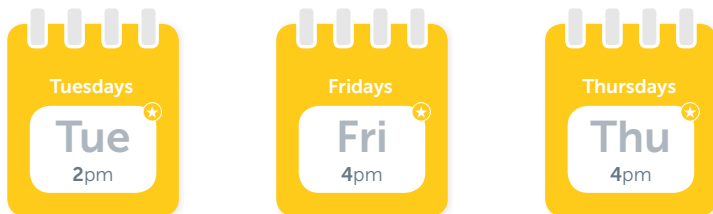
TOP 10 CELEBRITIES BRANDS ON INSTAGRAM

RANK	BRAND	FOLLOWERS	ENGAGEMENT RATE
1	 Selena Gomez	132.9M	2.70%
2	 Cristiano Ronaldo	119.7M	2.72%
3	 Ariana Grande	117.2M	1.40%
4	 Beyoncé	110.5M	2.29%
5	 Kim Kardashian West	106.6M	1.33%
6	 Taylor Swift	106.1M	1.78%
7	 Kylie	100.9M	1.99%
8	 therock	99.1M	1.07%
9	 Justin Bieber	96.3M	2.24%
10	 Nj	88.1M	1.79%

AUTOMOTIVE

It turns out, people like looking at fast, fancy cars on Instagram - quite a lot, actually. On average, **automotive accounts pull in 728214 followers**. Automotive accounts post 19 times per month on average, and **a post will get roughly 10951 likes and 42 comments**.

TOP 3 MOST POPULAR TIMES TO POST



TOP 15 HASHTAGS IN AUTOMOTIVE

#carsofinstagram, #tbt, #instacar, #car, #repost, #cars, #mbw, #sema2017, #carstagram, #travel, #mercedesbenz, #suv, #roadtrip, #f1, #carporn

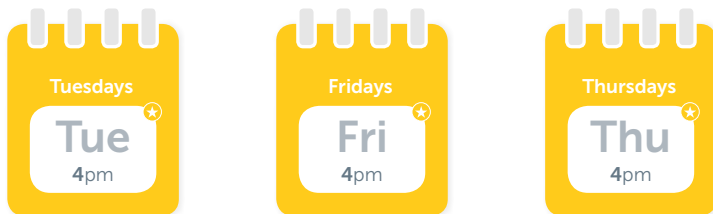
TOP 10 AUTOMOTIVE BRANDS ON INSTAGRAM

RANK	BRAND	FOLLOWERS	ENGAGEMENT RATE
1	 BMW	14.6M	1.98%
2	 Mercedes-Benz	12.2M	1.89%
3	 Lamborghini	11.6M	2.12%
4	 Audi	10.2M	2.48%
5	 Porsche	9.6M	1.74%
6	 Mercedes-AMG	6.6M	1.61%
7	 Maserati	6.3M	2.05%
8	 Ferrari	6.2M	3.24%
9	 Bugatti Official	5.9M	2.39%
10	 Jaguar	5.8M	1.64%

TOURISM

Travel agencies, tourism boards, and hotels come together to create a decent sized tourism industry on Instagram. **The average tourism account posted 1325 media in 2017, with each post averaging 3800 likes and 35 comments.** Check out some of these accounts if you're in the mood for daydreaming about your next getaway.


TOP 3 MOST POPULAR TIMES TO POST



TOP 15 HASHTAGS FOR THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

#travel, #sunset, #travelgram, #wanderlust, #repost, #tbt, #nature, #instatravel, #vacation, #instagood, #avgeek, #adventure, #traveltuesday, #holiday, #beach

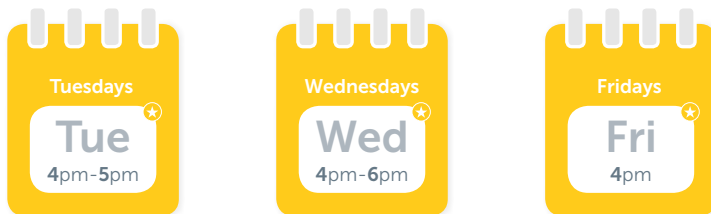
TOP 10 TOURISM BRANDS ON INSTAGRAM

RANK	BRAND	FOLLOWERS	ENGAGEMENT RATE
1	 Australia	2.9M	3.10%
2	 Dubai	2.5M	3.63%
3	 @LONDON	2.2M	2.70%
4	 Lonely Planet	1.7M	1.21%
5	 New York City by Liz E.	1.4M	1.84%
6	 TripAdvisor	1.3M	1.05%
7	 #MyDubai	858.9k	1.61%
8	 Visit Dubai	765.9k	1.69%
9	 CVC Viagens	687.6k	0.63%
10	 Beach Park	615.8k	1.02%

NON-PROFIT

Instagram is widely utilised by a variety of NGOs as one of their most important marketing platforms. With **around 106 417 followers per account, 1900 likes and 25 comments per post**, NGOs post roughly the same amount as food accounts: approximately every second day.










TOP 3 MOST POPULAR TIMES TO POST



TOP 15 HASHTAGS USED BY NON-PROFIT BRANDS

#givingtuesday, #repost, #christmas, #nature, #education, #mondaymotivation, #love, #smile, #wildlife, #climatechange, #africa, #worldkindnessday, #giveback, #bethechange, #tbt

TOP 10 NON-PROFIT BRANDS ON INSTAGRAM

RANK	BRAND	FOLLOWERS	ENGAGEMENT RATE
1	 UNICEF	2.1M	1.64%
2	 WWF International	928.3k	2.73%
3	 The Honest Company	792k	0.78%
4	 Malala Fund	757.9k	3.64%
5	 Forbidden Knowledge	713.3k	1.25%
6	 Greenpeace International	643.1k	2.43%
7	 oceana	445.4k	2.19%
8	 charity: water	366k	1.36%
9	 Mercy For Animals	341.6k	2.27%
10	 Casa De Dios	327.2k	0.59%

CONCLUSION

So, this is it! Hopefully this report has provided a solid overview of how the average Instagram user interacts on the platform. We've also looked at some interesting data on the type of content published on Instagram in 2017, as well as how some of the most important KPIs, such as engagement rate, post likes and follower numbers, vary from industry to industry. You might be surprised by some of the findings, such as the most popular filter (none!) or the engagement rate of videos compared to photo posts, whereas others, such as most popular hashtags, might have been expected.

On a final note, just before you go, you might be interested to check out [Iconosquare's Instagram Predictions for 2018](#). How many of these are already on your agenda?

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