



A Marketing Professional's

Basic Guide to

Instagram



info@indusnet.co.in
www.indusnet.co.in
INDIA | UK | USA | SINGAPORE
+91 33 2357 6070

Published by:



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For any help or clarification,

get connected with our experts at
info@indusnet.co.in

Indus Net Technologies Pvt. Ltd.

532, SDF Building, Sec V, Salt Lake, Kolkata–700091, India
e: info@indusnet.co.in, www.indusnet.co.in

Preface

As prophesized by social media marketing veterans, Instagram did become the next lethal tool of social media marketing. With Instagram's far reaching visual approach, it has certainly become a major part of social media marketing campaigns.

However, not many marketers are aware of the diverse benefits of using this social media tool, as a result of which they tend to overlook it. With over millions of blogs and suggestion available on the internet on how to master the art of using social media tools for successful marketing campaigns, it gets almost impossible for a newbie marketer to make his way through the Babel.

This eBook is a simple and basic guide to use Instagram for social media marketing and learn how it can do wonders to a marketing campaign. Marketing professionals who have just begun to use social media tools will benefit immensely from this document.

“

Instagram was created because there was no single place dedicated to giving your mobile photos a place to live and to be seen. ”

- **Kevin Systrom**

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Introduction to Instagram

“

The major reason why Instagram works is that you can follow anyone out there and start following their photos immediately.

- Kevin Systrom

”

Social media tools provide an excellent platform for marketers to directly connect with their potential customers without much ado; this also helps in brand building and promotion of new start-ups with minimum investment. No doubt, it is the minimum investment part that appeals the most to the marketers, but the customer engagement offered by social media tools cannot be left unnoticed.

This medium of marketing engages customers far more than any other medium of marketing, from conducting surveys to filling in feedback forms, users find this more comfortable than any other conventional methods.

It is the most popular online photo and video sharing social networking website, having said that, it is the photo sharing feature that shot this website to fame. This service was launched in October 2010, and instantly became a hit amongst its users; however its popularity remained limited to a cult. Instagram users kept increasing over the years and its success graph never witnessed a dip and a steep rise in its popularity was observed after Facebook acquired this service in 2013.

Instagram is not just another run of the mill photo sharing service, what sets it aside is its user friendly interface and the popular digital filters which enhance the quality of pictures and make them even more captivating.

Instagram Statistics

Instagram is no longer just a photo sharing service; in 2012 it introduced the option of creating web profile, this feature labeled Instagram at par with other social networking websites. Another milestone was placed in the history of Instagram in December 2013 when Instagram Direct was introduced to protect the privacy of its users. Instagram Direct allows its users to share photos with only a chosen few rather than dishing it out in the profile for public display.



Photos Uploaded
every single day

55
million



Comments Posted
in a day

86.4
million



Photos Liked
in a single day

691.2
million

Just like any other social networking website Instagram too is extremely addictive, according to statistical reports 70% of its users log in every single day to check for updates and of course, they also go snoop about on other people's profiles.

Speaking of addiction, we must not forget the category of people who just can't get enough of Instagram in a day, 35% of Instagram users return back and log in multiple times to get a whiff of their dope. These percentages indicate staggering numbers, which in turn throws light on the frenzy created by Instagram.

Using Instagram for Marketing

We are well aware of the benefits of a visual marketing over text based marketing; the former is more captivating and easily engages the target audience. Marketing and advertising in electronic media has already established that a visual environment for marketing is extremely necessary and in the era of millennials it is imperative for marketers to utilize the visual resources in the virtual domain.

As said by Frederick R. Barnard "A picture is worth a thousand words", so why need words when a picture can fill the bill. Photos can strike a chord with people's emotions they can also be used by companies to give a personal touch and in turn aid in brand building. When it comes to marketing, customers are more likely to believe a photo than a craftily written text and Instagram offers it all with a hassle free approach.

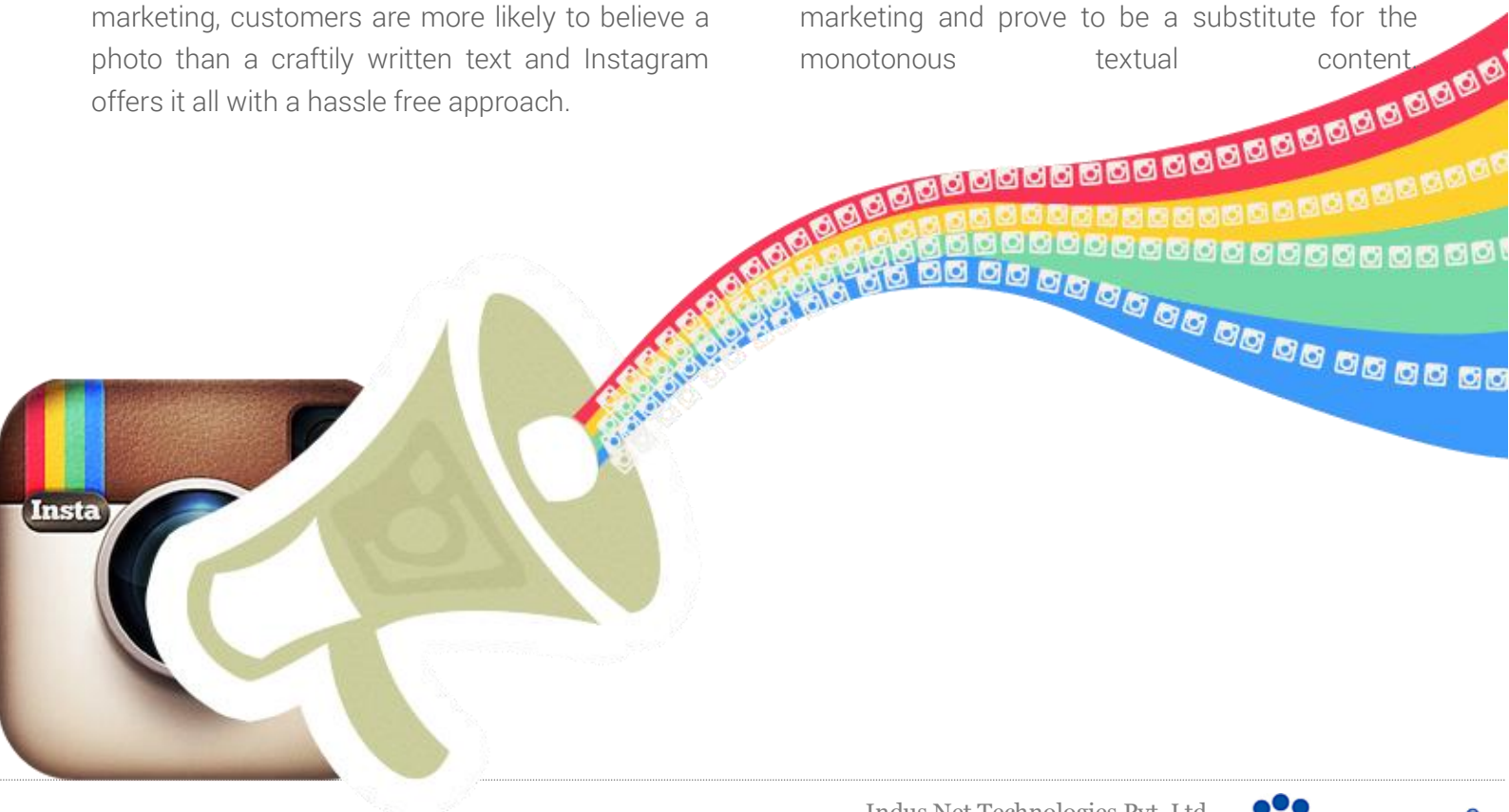
Instagram's popularity owes to its simplicity and its ever growing success over its competitors is because it does not involve any brain teasing features. To add to it, this particular social networking tool has a humongous user base and reaches out to a diverse target audience, this increases the odds of a generating leads and promoting the company.

When we talk about photos, they need not always be clicked; infographics can also qualify as photos on

Instagram. Infographics have emerged as another powerful tool engage customers, just like regular pictures, they convey the message in a fraction of a second without much text involved in them. Using infographics can fire up Instagram marketing and prove to be a substitute for the monotonous textual content.

“
Instagram has become
one of my favorite
platforms because of its
simplicity.”

- Amy Jo Martin



A 4-Step Guide to Using Instagram

Devising a marketing strategy on Instagram is not much work, however a systematic and an organized approach can yield greater returns. The primary motive of marketing on Instagram is to generate leads for your company, but when we are addressing to a wide array of target audience we might as well have few other secondary objective to make it more cost efficient. A step wise approach to devise your own marketing strategy is given below:

Step 1

Do not be in a hurry to share pictures, do some ground work

It is extremely necessary to lay the foundation of your visual marketing campaign before sharing photos on Instagram to engage your brand's target audience. Develop the visual content by picking up feedback from the industry, try to comprehend what the target audience really want to see and how you can turn it into an opportunity to engage them. Get a grip of all the relevant gossip points, work on them to get your target audience talking about your company. It is imperative to create the visual content in line with the above mentioned tips to set the customers abuzz.

After the necessary ground work is done, one can move to devising an execution strategy and start selecting the visual content.

Step 2

Dare to share

Collecting market intel can give you a clear idea of what must be dished out on Instagram, using which marketers can create their visual content. Now, when you are developing visual content it must be kept in mind that there could be a stiff completion in the market and to beat the competitors your content must be eminent and recognized. Maintain the exclusivity of your content by making it available only on Instagram, this will appeal to the cult following of your brand.

Users find intentional "leaks" extremely arresting, they cannot take their eyes off it, you can turn this loop into a gold mine. You can "leak" the dates of the upcoming discount sale, a little peek on how effective your company's processes are, discount coupons which were otherwise categorized for privileged customers, those are a lot of dirty tricks!

Make your content aesthetic and not artsy, Instagram users have a discerning eye for aesthetics and they mostly discarded anything that looks remotely flimsy. An advice to marketers, do not be shy to seek help of an expert or outsource this segment to an agency with great taste as this will be the keystone of your campaign.

Go a step ahead and give your visual marketing campaign a personal touch by adding testimonials written by the employees, positive feedback shared by your prominent customers. You can also share impressive photos of your inner workings to give your customers an insight into your company, this can make your customers feel special and can establish brand loyalty.

It is safe to say that Instagram shot hashtags to fame. Hashtag is an effective feature which allows customers to reach out to your photos through a simple search. This feature can directly fetch an obscene number of followers if you use the right keywords. Implement hashtags to popular keywords which are relevant and use them on all your posts. E.g. #hashtags #viral #trending #dashboard.

Step 3

Post regularly to engage customers

Posting photos regularly is essential to keep the customers hooked on to your page on Instagram. Marketers can share pictures of recent activities held in the company, with this activity customers tend to check the company profile regularly.

There is another sly trick to get your customers hooked on to your page, you can conduct contests through photos or have your customers submit photos. It is an empirical way to engage customers, no matter how lame a contest is, you will always find users contesting.

Set apart your company by looking for unknown marketing strategies or the ones that are best fit for your company or brand, which can be done only by being a regular on Instagram.

Step 4

Build relationships

Using Instagram is unlike using other social networking sites. While one can be quite direct in one's marketing approach on Twitter and Facebook, Instagram requires you to take on a subtle role. You need to find your leads and build relationships with them. It is basically a photo sharing application and all your activities must concern that hobby.

Comment on the effects and filters that people use and encourage them to post more pictures. Build a healthy relationship with them and attempt to understand what they need. Relationships that are built on Instagram can be converted into more profitable ones by asking them to subscribe to your newsletter, if they really like what you offer.

Do not solicit products and services blatantly as that will alienate your followers. Instead, focus on developing healthy and long term relationships.

What Must You **Avoid** Doing On Instagram

Instagram may be a huge success in the world of visual content marketing but may not be fit for your company if your target audience does not use it, and this should be checked while doing the groundwork. However, if you discover that Instagram is used by your target audience, there are 3 important things that you need to avoid, while using it.

1 **Avoid soliciting responses:** There is probably nothing more than asking people to comment on your pictures or to like them. If you continue to solicit for likes and comments, your followers may quietly unfollow you and that can be very embarrassing.

2 **Avoid posting too many images:** While this may seem counterintuitive, Instagram being a photo sharing tool, no one wants to see images that are repetitive in theme or aesthetics. Make sure that you limit your photo sharing activity to a moderate level. Share images that will help you in your marketing campaign and not images that do not have any relationship with you or your brand.

3 **Avoid posting pictures of only your products:** While Instagram is a great place to post pictures of your products, it is not necessarily a great idea to post pictures of only your products. Instead, choose a theme and post pictures that will help you to engage with your audience.

Final Thoughts

Social media marketing has witnessed a significant diversion from text based content to visual based content. This deviation stems from the fact that it is easier to engage customers with visual based content than text based content, besides visual content is far more captivating than its predecessor.

This shift in paradigm has shot image sites like Instagram to fame, to the extent that even Facebook couldn't resist the temptation of acquiring it. Another reason for the instant recognition of marketing by visual based content is the shift of focus on mobile devices. Few years back no one ever thought that every smart phone can be turned into a platform for marketing and brand building.

And when it comes to mobile devices, nobody prefers to read tiny texts especially when people are on the go, which again worked in the advantage of Instagram: its fast, easy to comprehend and conveys the right message.

If you need any clarifications or if you seek more information about how Instagram can help you increase conversion rates and build a formidable marketing strategy, do not hesitate to contact us.



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Our Global Presence

Kolkata (Head Quarter)

4th Floor, SDF Building,
Saltlake Electronic Complex,
Kolkata- 700091,
West Bengal, India

Chennai

1st Floor, Millennium Tower,
146, Nelson Manikam Road,
Chennai 600029,
Tamil Nadu, India

New Delhi

B-25, 2nd Floor, Sec 64,
Noida 201301
India

Mumbai

11th Floor, Tower B,
Peninsula Business Park,
S.B. Road, Lower Parel,
Mumbai – 400013, India

London(UK)

Indus Net Technologies Pvt. Ltd.,
6 Hays Lane,
London, SE1 2QG
United Kingdom

Boise (USA)

Indus Net Technologies Inc.,
507 1/2 W Hays St,
Boise, ID 83702,
USA

Singapore

Indus Net Technologies Pte. Ltd.,
1 North Bridge Road,
#19-04/05,
High Street Centre,
Singapore(179094)



info@indusnet.co.in

www.indusnet.co.in

INDIA | UK | USA | SINGAPORE

+91 33 2357 6070