10 reasons to use Instagram for business

There are ten good reasons your business needs an Instagram account, says Keira Gilleece.

With the recent introduction of clickable, sponsored ads on Instagram, it's clear that the photo-sharing platform is trying to make itself more accessible to brands and businesses. This new feature, combined with a rapidly growing young audience, means that the social network can no longer be ignored as part of a comprehensive marketing strategy.

1: 100% organic reach

Unlike Facebook, where impressions are restricted by an algorithm, pictures on Instagram reach 100% of your audience. This means that while you may have a bigger following on Facebook, you are more likely to get meaningful engagement on Instagram.

2: Growing audience

Instagram currently has over 400 million monthly active users and is growing rapidly. While Facebook usage is stagnating amongst millennials, Instagram continues to be the social network of choice for those aged 15-30.

3: Hashtags

Although these exist on Twitter and even Facebook now, they are still most relevant on Instagram. You can add up to 30 tags per picture, and data shows that more hashtags equal more impressions.

4: Metrics

One issue in Instagram's early days is that it was very hard for businesses to measure reach, sessions, or successful content. However, now numerous platforms such as [SumAll](#), Nitrogram and Static can give insights into trending hashtags and photo impressions, so there's no excuse not to include Instagram in your social media strategy.

5: Less competition

On Facebook, your business may be competing with 40 million others. However, the simple fact is fewer businesses are aware of marketing potential on Instagram, meaning that now is the perfect time to start building your brand following.

6: Demographics

The majority of Instagram users are under the age of 30, compared to social networks like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn where the age groups are spread more evenly. This means that if your business wants to target anyone in that age category, the power of Instagram cannot be overlooked.

7: Engagement

A 2014 study by Forrester showed that when looking at 2,500 brands on social media, Instagram's engagement rate was 58 times higher than Facebook. While most Facebook posts have an average of 0.1% engagement, Instagram boasts an incredible 4.21% per post.

8: Scheduling content

One of the biggest factors holding back businesses from using Instagram was the inability to schedule content in advance. However, in June, Hootsuite added this feature to its software, meaning you can now integrate Instagram posts into your content calendar.

9: Shop Now

While not available in Ireland yet, Instagram's 'Shop Now' button has revolutionised the way businesses use the social network. It means that users can now buy directly from the platform, creating a seamless shopping experience while enabling businesses an easier way to sell the goods.

10: User generated content

Unlike Facebook and Twitter, Instagram is a great way to engage with your customers by asking them to generate content, in the form of a photo competition or using a dedicated brand hashtag.

This creates earned media while driving engagement and reach.