HubSpot | **★ mention**

INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT REPORT

What Your Company Needs to Know for 2020

Table of Contents

Instagram at a Glance

With over 1 billion monthly active users, 25+ million business accounts, and a projected 14 billion USD in revenue, Instagram has come a long way from a little photo-sharing app.

What started as a humble social network grew into one of the most robust business platforms - helping brands cement a highly effective marketing channel **and breeding a new generation of innovative entrepreneurs.**

Instagram achieved incredible growth first and foremost by truly understanding what its users wanted. They also learned how to help brands and businesses grow quickly by developing features that helped them turn likes and interactions into tangible ROI.

All of this means two key things:

1 Instagram is constantly reinventing itself

2 Brands nowadays can't afford not to be on Instagram - if they want to capture a good percentage of the consumer population

No longer just for fashion and lifestyle brands, **the platform can help you reach new, relevant audiences and grow your brand exponentially** - whether you're a B2B company or a non-profit organization.

However, you'll need to understand what the changing trends are and how they can impact your strategy.

From which hashtags to include, to how long your caption should be, to what kind of influencer gets the highest engagement **- businesses need to understand what will help them break through this increasingly competitive space.**

We created this report to provide our readers with the most up to date Instagram data and insights, to the best of our online monitoring abilities.

LOCATION   @MENTION   #HASHTAG

12 34   ♫ MUSIC   GIF

Methodology

We've gathered an impressive amount of social media data to create this report.

In fact, **we've analyzed 81,258,182 Instagram posts and 1,676,748 of the top users** to observe trends about engagement, influencers, location, caption length, and other insights that would be interesting and valuable to businesses, as well as marketers.

Report Highlights

- Image posts received 27.55% more likes than permanent video posts

- The average Instagram post contains 10.743886135116517 hashtags, but 50% of Instagram posts include less than 6 hashtags

- The most engaging tagged Instagram accounts are beauty and cosmetic related

- 52.35% of Instagram followers have less than 1,000 followers

- The most geo-tagged city in the world is Los Angeles, California and the tagged location with the highest engagement is Coachella, California

Instagram Engagement

As marketers, we spend a *lot* of time creating content and getting people to interact with it.

The number of likes and comments we get, at the end of the day, tells us if our content is resonating with the right audience. For this reason, Instagram engagement was all the rage last year as *it was considered to be holy grail of KPI of brand awareness.*

But is it still as relevant today?

To put it into perspective, **an average image on Instagram gets 23% more engagement than one published on Facebook** (BusinessofApps), even though the latter has 2x more monthly active users.

For brands, this means that people are more likely to interact with your branded content on Instagram instead of gloss over it in their Facebook Newsfeed - **making Instagram a far more effective platform in terms of engagement.**

However, does engagement still mean the same thing across social networks today?
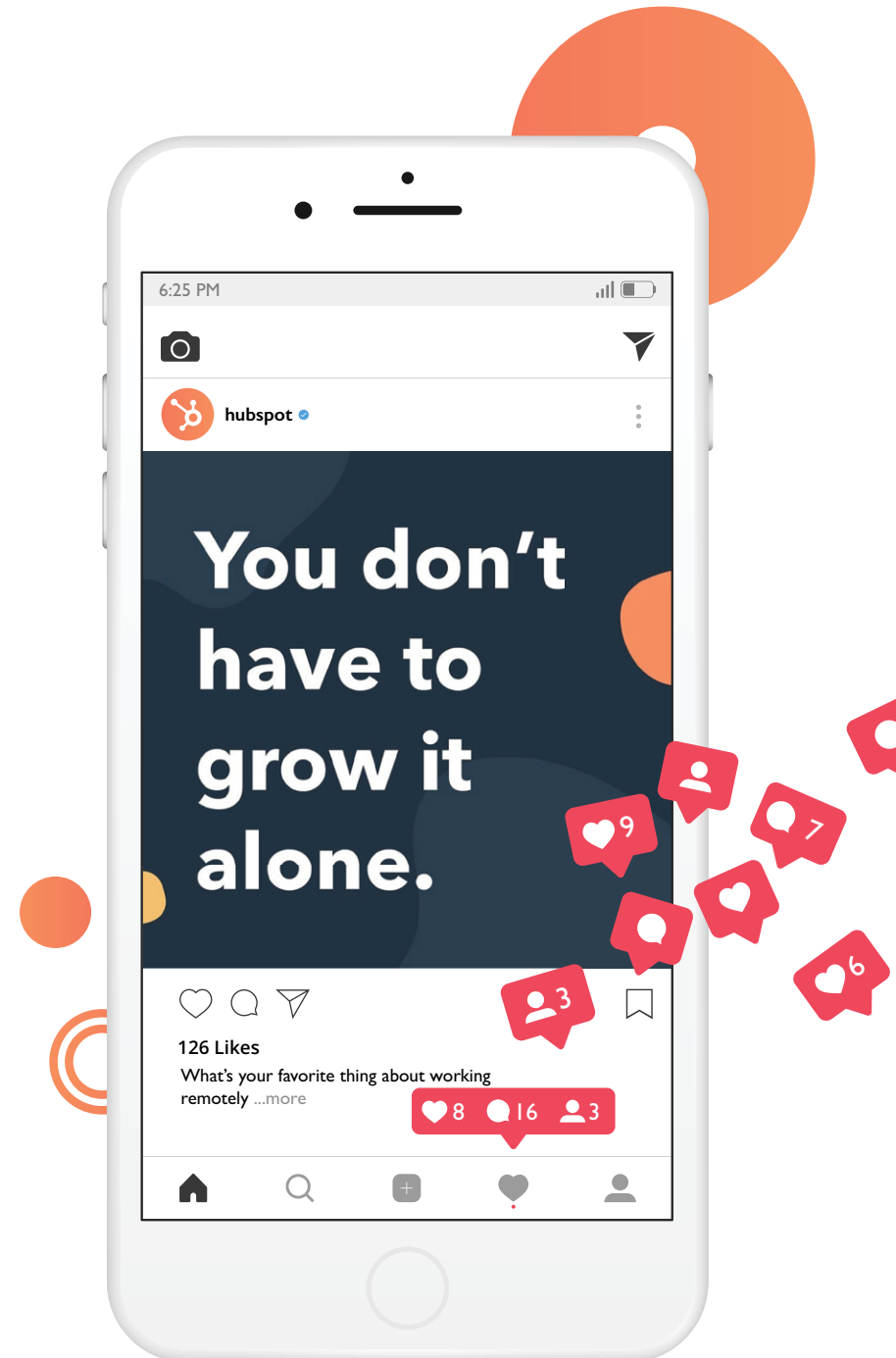
WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT?

Engagement is essentially how many interactions an user has with your content. On Instagram, the most common types of engagement are likes and comments.

According to ecommerce solution Oberlo:

> **Engagement rates are healthy metrics to monitor because they underline how frequently your following interacts with your content, and force you to focus on important data, rather than vanity metrics (like the number of followers you have).**
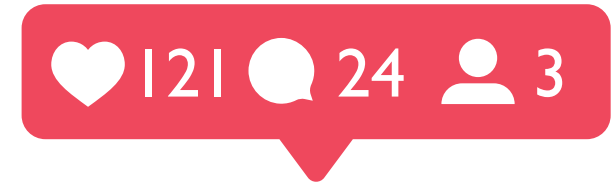
You can calculate this by adding up the average likes and comments that you receive per post, divided by your total number of followers. However, it's important to keep in mind of two caveats when measuring engagement:

1 A lot of different things can be considered as 'engagement' today

**2** There is no universal way to measure engagement

As Instagram has continued to reinvent itself over the years, it has introduced many new features such as Stories, IGTV, and more. This means that engagement is no longer limited to likes and comments on a photo post, but also views, shares of video, as well as direct messages.

All in all, engagement isn't a one-size-fits-all metric and you need to base it on what is important to your brand.

For example, if you're a new electric bicycle brand, you may be more interested in the number of views you get on your daily Stories which show off the features of your product in action, rather than the number of likes you get on your photos.

Another thing to keep in mind is that the more followers you have, the lower your engagement would be - we'll get into this later in the report.

For now, just remember to focus on engagement metrics work for you because at the end of the day, **the most important thing is that your community is interacting with your content.**
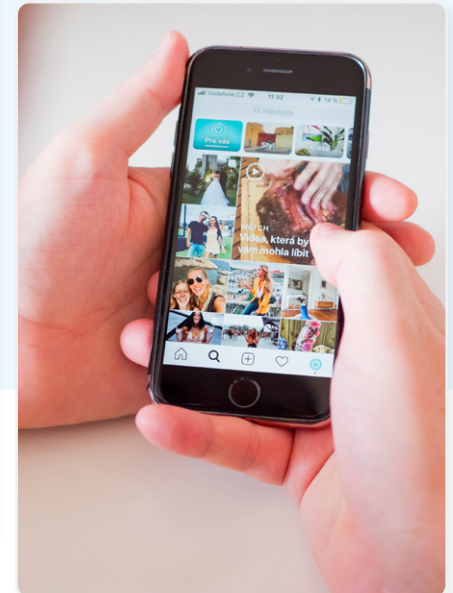
LIKES ON INSTAGRAM BY POST TYPE

It's no surprise: *as more brands entered Instagram, it became noisier and more competitive.*

Companies were going toe-to-toe, competing for the same eyeballs and number of likes.

For this reason, influencer marketing started to take off and brands started flocking to popular Instagram users to help them increase the likes and comments they receive on their branded content.

However, in April 2019, Instagram announced that it will start testing a feature of 'hiding' public like counts in certain countries, in an effort to get Instagram users to *"focus on the photos and videos you share, not how many likes they get."*

Social Media Today

Does this mean we should start disregarding likes altogether? Not quite yet.

Let's first look at what trends we observed related to likes this year.

We're going to focus on likes received on three main types of Instagram posts: photos, videos, and photo carousels. This is because unlike ephemeral content such as Stories, these three types of posts are permanent and therefore would have more complete data.

From our analysis of more than 80 million posts, we observed that the average Instagram post receives a whopping **14869.1 likes**.

Keep in mind that the high number takes into account the posts of super influential users and public figures, which skews the average heavily.

Image posts received 27.55% more likes than permanent video posts, and 13.55% more likes than carousel posts.

Average number of likes vs. Type of post
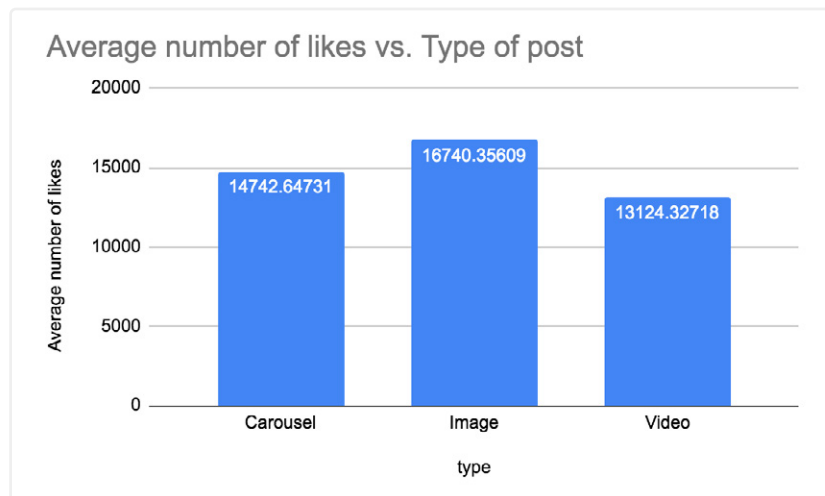
If we look at the median number of likes instead - it's closer to 3600 **- which suggests 50% of users receive less than 3600 likes for the average post.** One reason for this high number is due to our data size this year having almost doubled from last year's.

Another potential reason is: people have been simply liking a lot more posts.

Median number of likes vs. Type of post
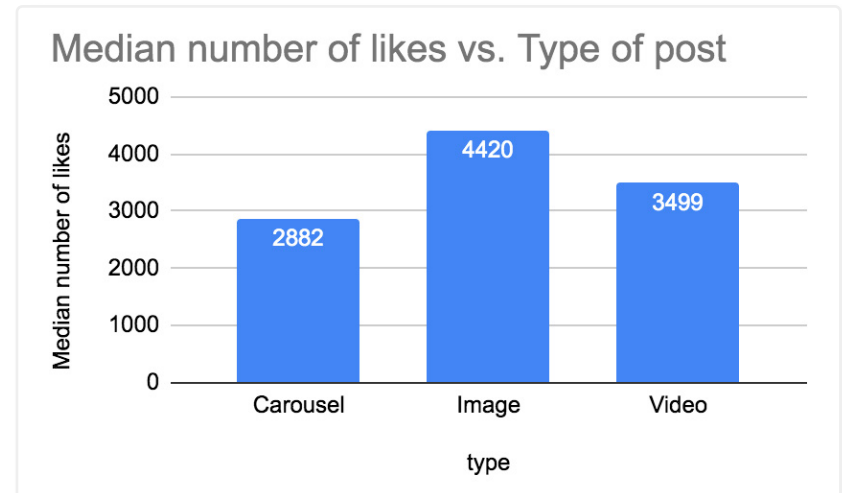
This may come as a surprise: **image posts received on average the highest number of likes** this year. As permanent video posts has received *the highest number of likes according to our past two Instagram reports, this could be suggesting two things:*

1. Instagram users have been publishing less permanent video posts to their feed as well as reacting less to them, potentially due to switching their preference for creating Stories

2. Instagram users have a renewed interest in permanent image posts

COMMENTS ON INSTAGRAM BY POST TYPE

What's worth more to your brand, a like, or a comment?

As Instagram begins to gradually roll out the removal of public likes, comments might begin to have more weight when it comes to engagement.
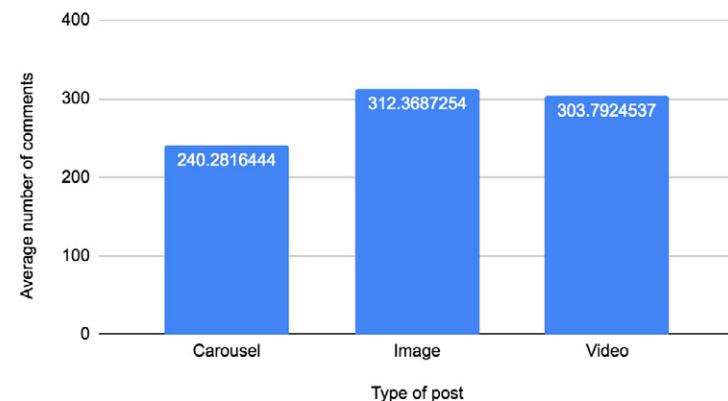
According to the Sydney Morning Herald:

> **"** Without a public tally of likes, it is likely that comments will become an even stronger indicator of how people are interacting with a particular Instagram post. **"**

The average post on Instagram receives 285.48 comments, again, taking into account posts of highly influential users.

As our data shows this year that image posts received more likes on average than video or carousel, can we expect similar results when it comes to comments?

Average number of comments vs. Type of post

Type of post	Average number of comments
Carousel	240.2816444
Image	312.3687254
Video	303.7924537

HubSpot | mention

hubspot
HubSpot

alarym_agen
2w   2 likes

marketingby
feature and
helpful ✅ ✅
2w   2 likes

crosswords

2w   1 like   R

schoolofbot

2w   1 like   R

836 likes
FEBRUARY 5

As it turns out, image posts also ranked the highest in terms of comments, coming in just slightly ahead of videos.

Median number of comments vs. Type of post

Type of post	Median number of comments
Carousel	82
Image	106
Video	94
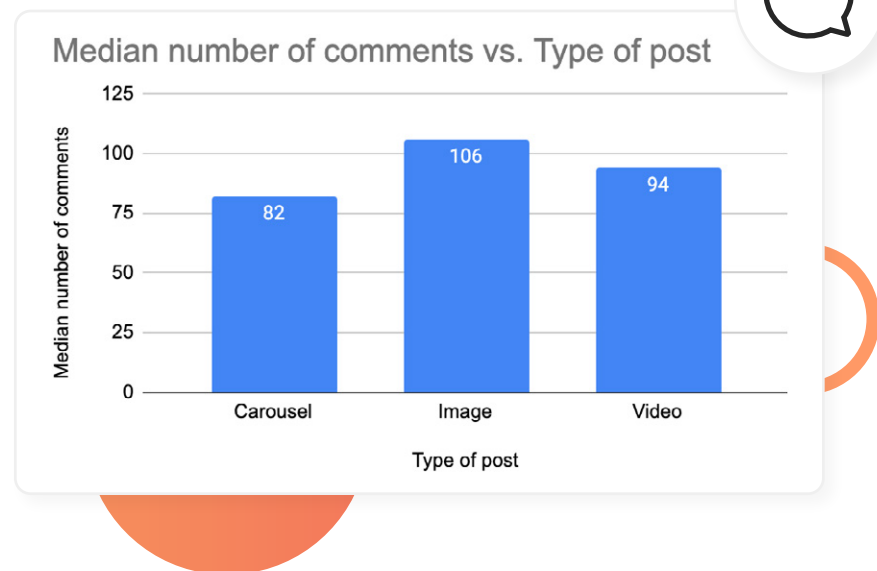
If we look at the median number for comments per image post, it's 106, which means that 50% of total users receive less than 106 comments per video post.

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

Increasing Instagram engagement gets more difficult year after year, due to the constant changes the platform implements to their algorithm.

However, this doesn't mean that getting a healthy engagement rate is impossible.

You'll want to make sure that you're posting consistently and have a good balance of different types of content including image posts and Instagram Stories.

Taking into account that Instagram is starting to remove likes, you may also want your content to start encouraging comments instead of likes.

Before you set your yearly KPIs, we recommend figuring out which Instagram metric is the most relevant to your business and why, and base your engagement on that.
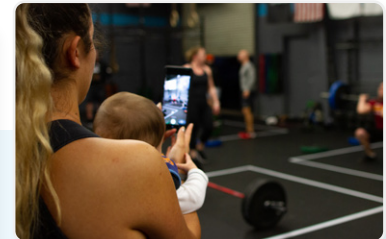
Hashtags

Originally introduced on Twitter to help users search tweets of specific topic by 'tagging' them, hashtags actually gained mainstream popularity across other social networks such as Facebook, Reddit, and of course - Instagram.

On IG, they're typically included in the captions or comments of a post as a way to organize different topics of content. Essentially, they're keywords that people would use to search for specific posts, but they also add context to a post.

Using hashtags can be an effective way to expose your content to new Instagram audiences that care about a certain topic or niche. For example, if you wanted your content to reach users that were into crossfit but are also mothers, you could use the hashtag #crossfitmom.

"Hashtags are powerful. They can help your posts reach a target audience, attract followers in your niche, increase engagement, and develop a more positive and recognizable brand image."

Hubspot blog

As hashtag use quickly gained popularity, brands were quick to capitalize on their effectiveness and started creating 'branded hashtags' to help people discover their branded posts.

Successful examples such as Lululemon's #thesweatlife and Coke's #shareacoke not only helped people find their specific branded content more easily, but it was also a clever way for these brands to get their community to produce free, user-generated content.
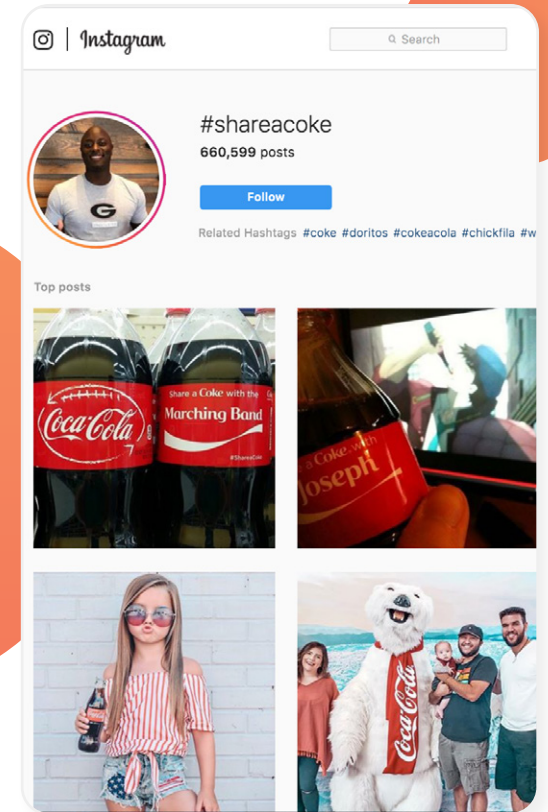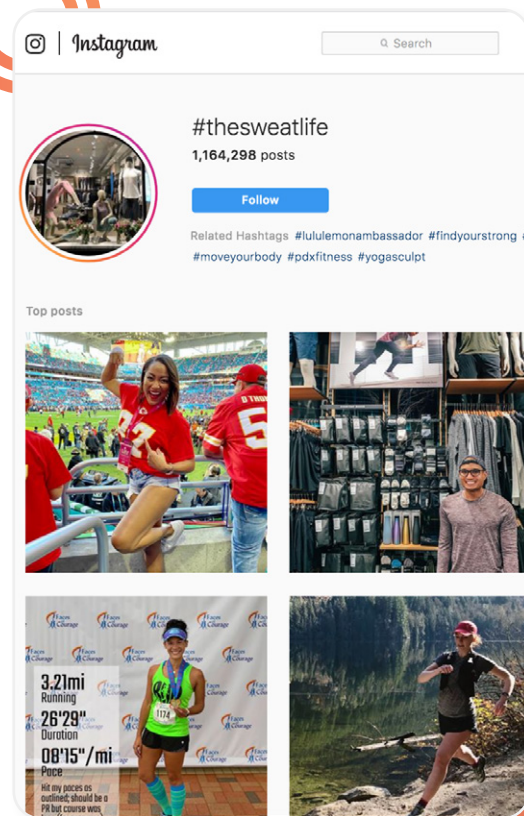
DOES USING HASHTAGS INCREASE ENGAGEMENT?

One thing is for certain: hashtags are ubiquitous on Instagram.

With every brand and influencer jumping on the hashtag bandwagon in the last few years, it's no surprise that **some marketers are starting to doubt the effectiveness of hashtags when it comes to increasing engagement.**

As we mentioned earlier, Instagram is also starting to tighten quality control with the gradual removal of public likes - does this mean that hashtags might also start having less of an impact on views and engagement?

According to Later

> Using relevant, targeted hashtags on your posts and stories is still one of the best ways to get discovered by new audiences on Instagram. And this can translate into more engagement, more followers, and more customers for your business.

So if using hashtags can still increase your engagement, how many and which ones should you use?


#networking
8,200,220 posts

#networkingevent
398,195 posts

#networkingz
137,933 posts

#networkingbusiness
198,285 posts

#networkingevents
218,121 posts
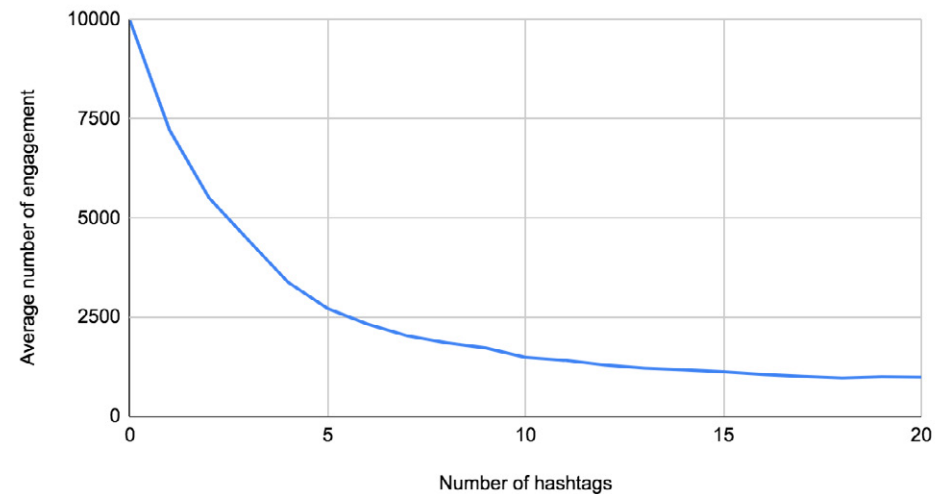
HubSpot | mention

ENGAGEMENT VS. NUMBER OF HASHTAGS

According to this year's findings, **the average Instagram post contains 10.743886135116517 hashtags.**

However, the median number of hashtags is actually 6, which tells us that 50% of Instagram posts include less than 6 hashtags.
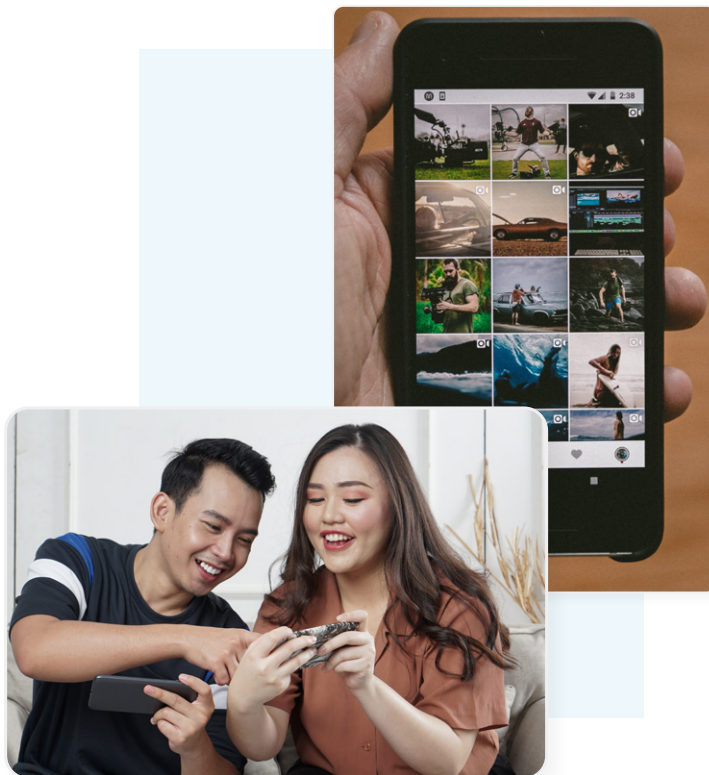
Average number of engagement vs. Number of hashtags

Our results suggest that including more than 6 hashtags can actually decrease your engagement - there are a few possible explanations for this:

- The engagement of a post tends to drop off after 6 or more hashtags are included

- Posts from top engaged profiles will get a high volume of likes and comments on their own, regardless if they're using hashtags or not

  ○ These posts may have impacted our averages

MOST POPULAR INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS

There are potentially hundreds of thousands of hashtags on Instagram, with new ones being created every minute. So how do you know which ones are the best to use for your post?

As Instagram set out to be the platform for visual and lifestyle content - there were no surprises when it came to the 20 most popular hashtags on the social network this year.

Frenquency vs. Hashtag
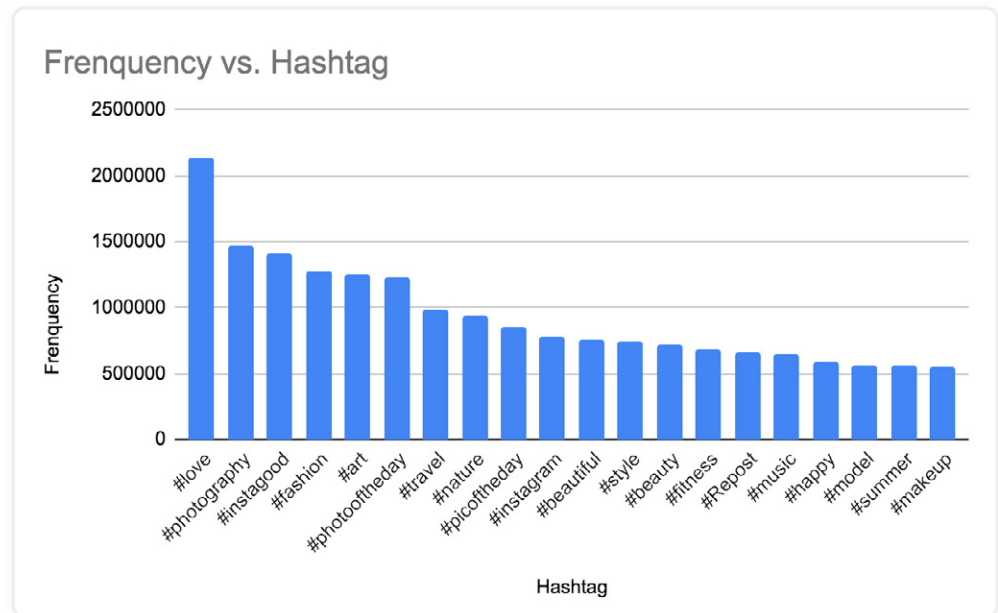
In fact, this suggests consistently that the most popular categories of content posted on the platform include: #fashion, #travel, #fitness, #music, and #photography.

Since the most popular hashtags equal the most used hashtags, does this mean you should be including them in yourposts? If engagement is what you're trying to increase, then no.

According to Influencer Marketing Hub:

> You need to balance your wish to use popular hashtags against the danger of being crowded out of high demand topics...If you are making an Instagram post that is about love, you might include #love as one of your 30 permitted hashtags. But you should probably focus on using related hashtags with smaller, yet still sizeable followings, such as #wonderful, #adorable, #hug, #lover, or even #loveisintheair.

MOST ENGAGING INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS

As we mentioned, using the most popular hashtags will not necessarily get you the engagement you're after.

Instead, you'll want to know what the most *engaging* hashtags are - these are found in the posts that have the most average number of comments and likes.
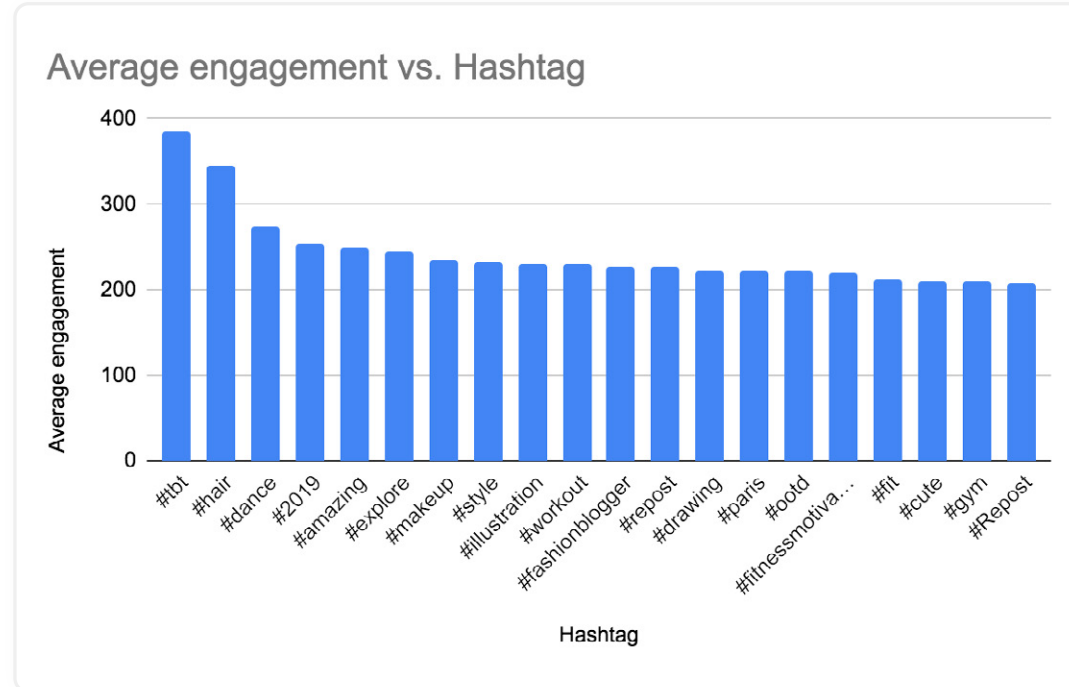
It turns out that the most engaging hashtags, appear to be a less generic than the most popular ones such as #love and #instagood.

In fact, the top engaged hashtag #tbt or Throwback Thursday, a pretty specific one people add to photos that are from 'back in the day'. As people love nostalgia on social media, it's easy to see why this hashtag would get higher engagement than others.

Another surprising contender on this list was #paris, the first location hashtag that we've seen in the most engaging hashtags list.

Average engagement vs. Hashtag

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

At the end of the day, just because you can include up to 30 hashtags in an Instagram caption, doesn't mean you should. We recommend using 5 - 6 hashtags that are super relevant to your post.

This means steering away from highly popular, generic hashtags and looking for ones that are specific to your niche.

If you aren't already following your competitors, partner brands, or influencers in your industry, do so and see what type of hashtags they're including in their posts. You'll also want to 'follow' hashtags related to your industry which you can do in your 'Explore' page.

Last but not least, don't forget about **branded and campaign hashtags.** They're specific to your business and you can include them across various types of content on Instagram including:

Feed posts   **Stories**   **IGTV**

Hubspot Blog

> ❝ Campaign hashtags are particularly useful for promoting a new product or upcoming event, or even just inspiring people. ❞

What's more, clever branded and campaign hashtags such as Lululemon's #thesweatlife and Herschel's #welltraveled can be extremely effective when it comes to encouraging user-generated content.

Keep in mind that good content will receive high engagement naturally, despite how many hashtags you use. On the contrary, using too many can decrease it.

Tagging

You've likely tagged or have been tagged in an Instagram post. Have you ever thought about why?

Tagging other users on the platform started out as a way to identify those people that were included in your photos or videos.
As time went on, it became good way to get more exposure on your posts:

Mention Blog

> ❝ When you tag someone on Instagram, they receive an instant notification, increasing –in theory– your chances of them getting involved with your content. ❞

But is it *actually* effective in getting people to engage with your content? With the onset of influencer marketing, we started to see more and more brands and celebrities being tagged in posts for promotional purposes, and vice versa. For this reason, some users were starting to find the behavior of being tagged in posts bit spam-like and off-putting.

According to our 2019 Instagram Report, we discovered that the more people you tag in your content, the less engagement you'll generate on your post.

Let's see if this still holds true today.
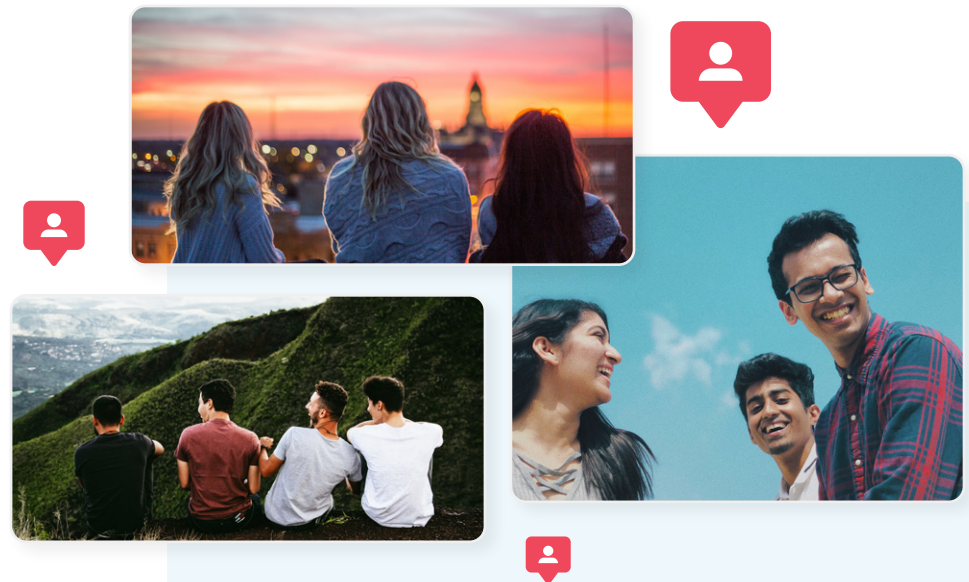
NUMBER OF USERS TAGGED

Currently, around 34.4% of Instagram posts contain no tagged users, which on the contrary shows a slight increase from last year where 40% of posts didn't tag any users.

Note: our data is only based on users tagged in Instagram posts and comments, not including those users tagged in Stories.

Number of posts vs. Users tagged
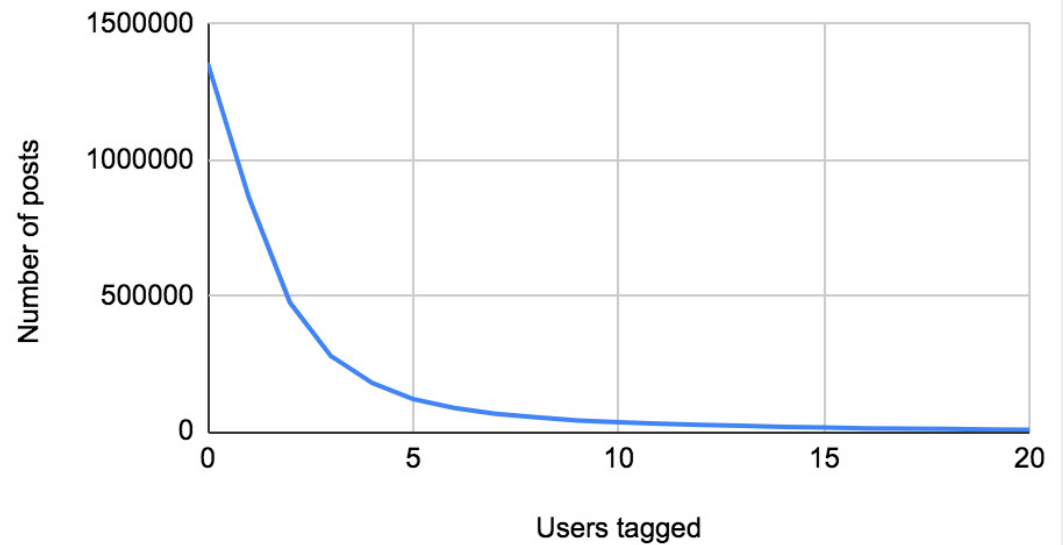
One thing is for sure: over the last three years, we've seen an year-over-year increase of people tagging users in posts.

If more people are tagging users, does this mean that it's increasing the engagement of their content?

MEDIAN LIKES PER USER TAGGED

What is the ideal number of users to tag in your post?

The thing is, highly engaging posts on Instagram typically don't tag users. These posts are usually published by super influential accounts with large followings - which cause them to receive a large volume of likes naturally.

Of course, there are exceptions such as when mega influencers like Kim Kardashian West tags a brand or another influential profile in her post.

Exceptions aside, we observed that tagging between 1- 3 users will return the highest amount of likes and comments.
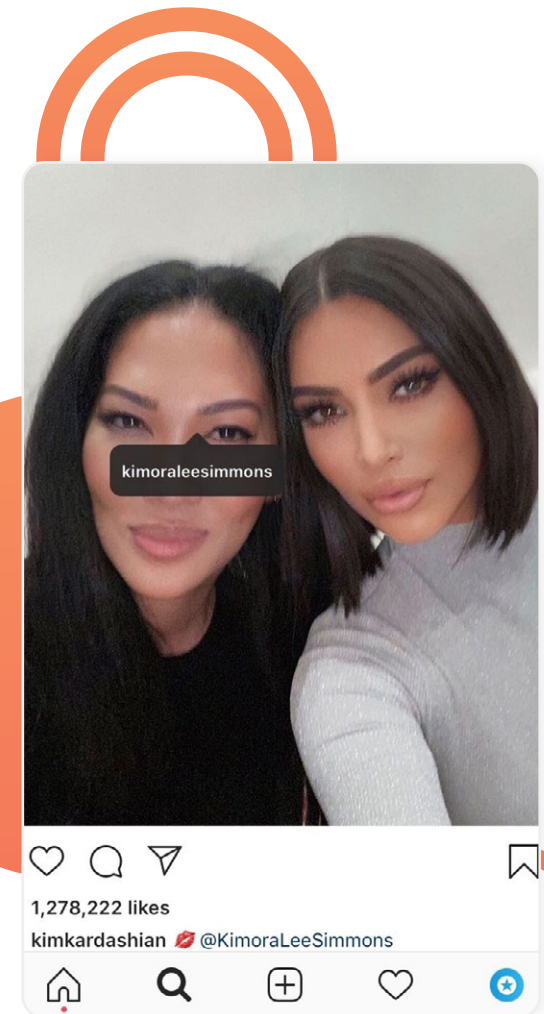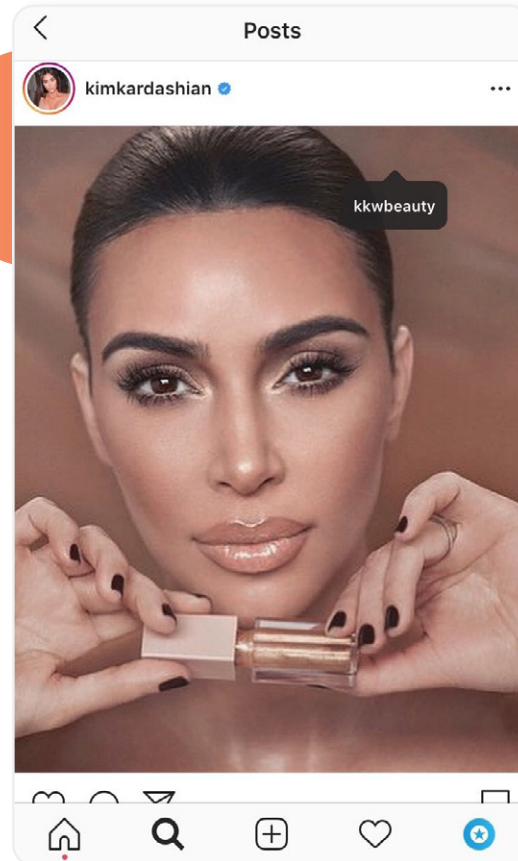
As we mentioned, more and more people have been tagging users and brands on Instagram over the last few years - this has likely made the tagged profiles less inclined to like or comment on the content compared to before.

By using the median number of likes instead of the average, the results are impacted less by highly influential accounts, giving us a more realistic representation.

Median likes vs. Users tagged
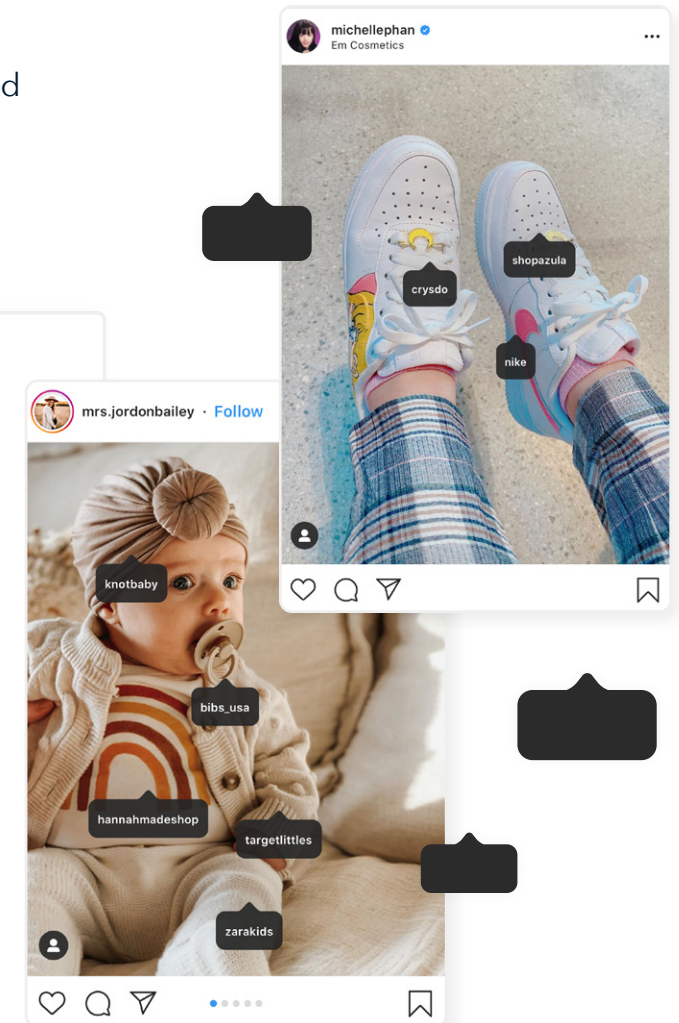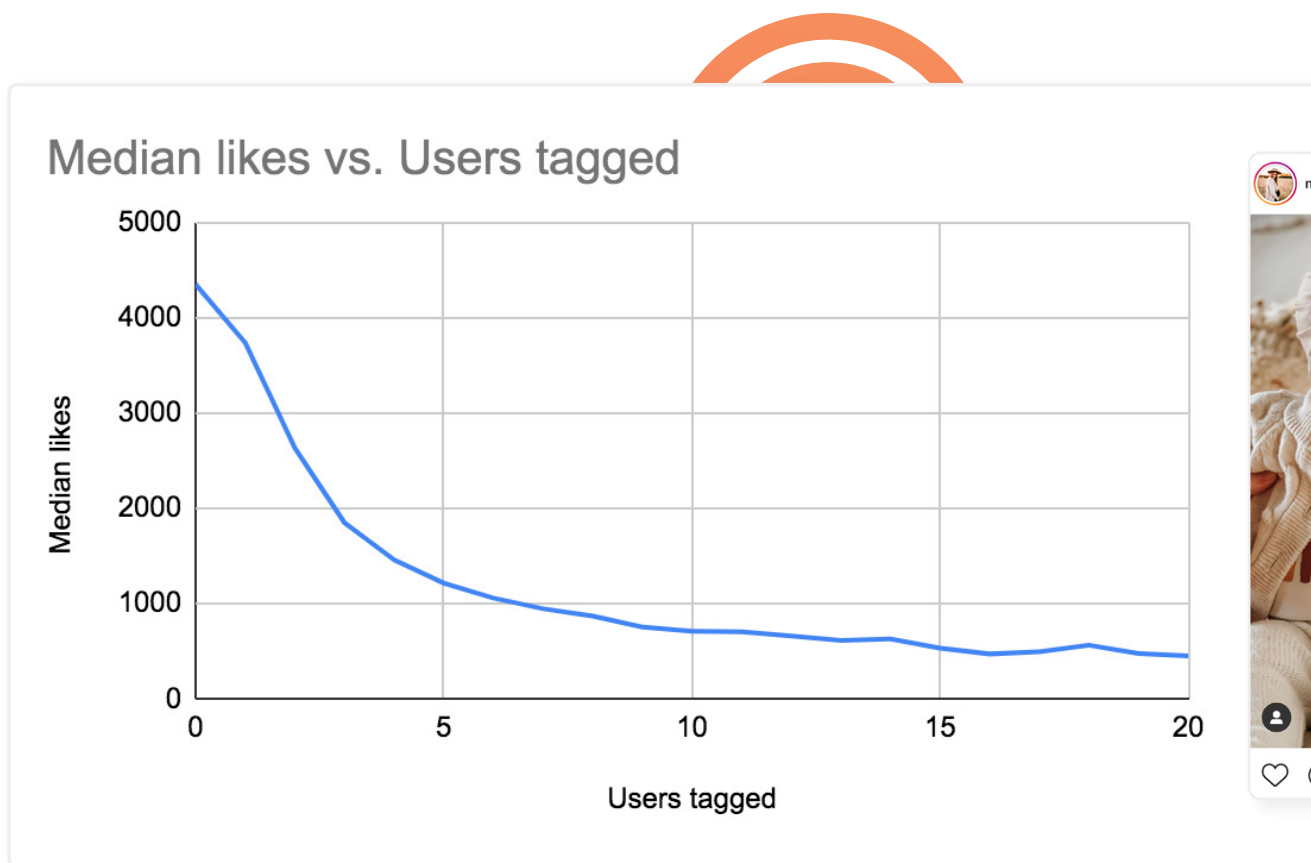
MOST ENGAGED TAGGED USER

In our 2019 report, Gareth Bale, the Welsh footballer of Real Madrid was the number one most engaging tagged user. This was due to Real Madrid winning the Champions League and a high volume of posts tagging him received tons of likes and comments

Who you think takes the spot this year for top engaged tagged user? Lil Nas X? Cardi B?

Average engagement vs. Instagram profile
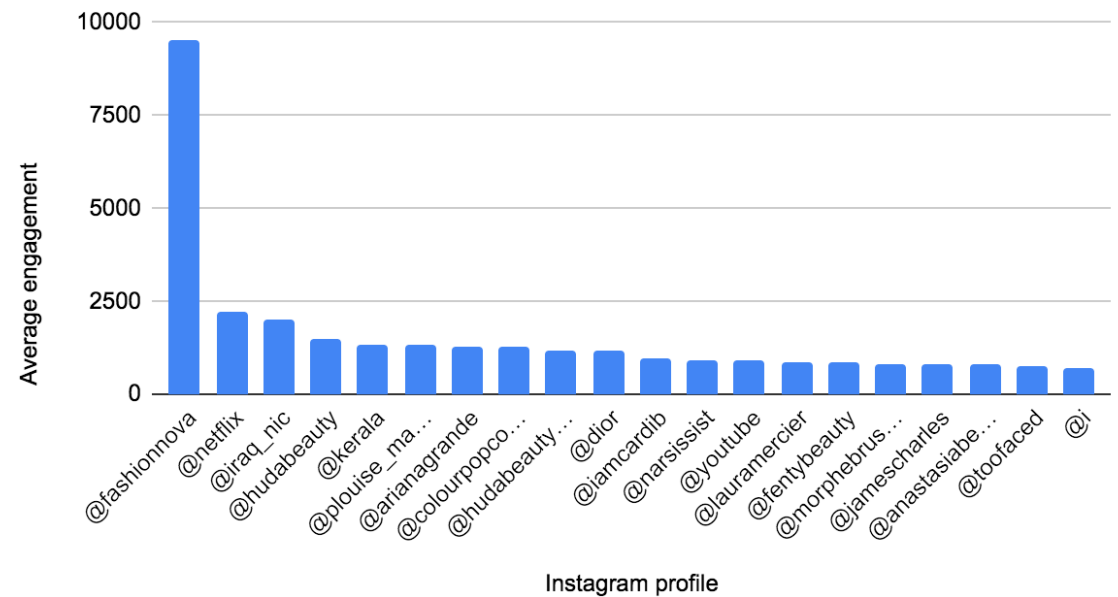
Rapper Cardi B was actually amongst our top 20 most engaged tagged user, but the #1 spot actually went to trendy fashion brand @fashionnova. According to WWD, the California-based company became one of the most searched fashion brands on the internet thanks to Instagram and influencer marketing.

By working with a network of 3000+ influencers like Kylie Jenner and Cardi B, Fashion Nova exploded as an 'Instagram brand'. In fact, a sponsored post tagging @fashionnova from the youngest Kardashian-Jenner clan can translate to $50,000 in sales.

In comparison to last year's list of most engaged tagged users, which were almost all football or sports-related, **we noticed a big trend in makeup and beauty accounts.** Of the top 20 users, almost half are the current most popular cosmetic brands including:

@hudabeauty

@colorpopcosmetics

@lauramercier

@fentybeauty

@anastasiabeverlyhills

@twofaced
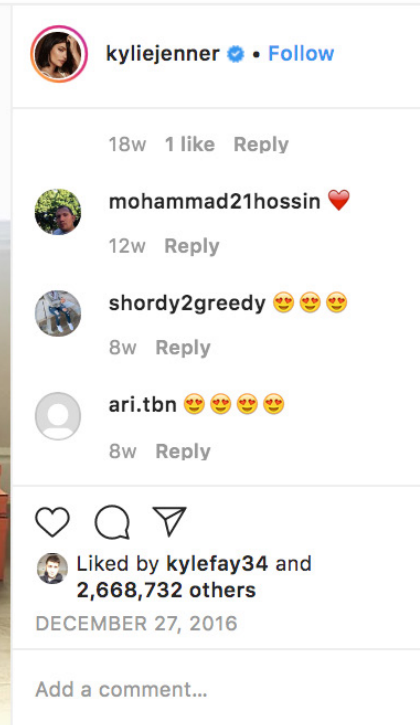
This indicates that it was a huge year for beauty brands on Instagram as posts related to makeup are the most engaging overall.

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

While tagging users can be an effective way to get more exposure and engagement for your brand, you'll still want to be cautious and mindful when doing so.

Here are some best practices to keep in mind when tagging:

1 **Only tag profiles that are relevant to your post.**
Tagging influencers that you've never worked with or random accounts that have nothing to do with your brand is poor Instagram etiquette and can come off as spam-like behavior.

2 **Tag profiles that you're reposting content from.**
This should be done in addition to crediting them for the post.

3 **Tag partners, clients, employees, and brand ambassadors.**
This gives them a little nudge to engage with your content and can help increase the engagement of your post.
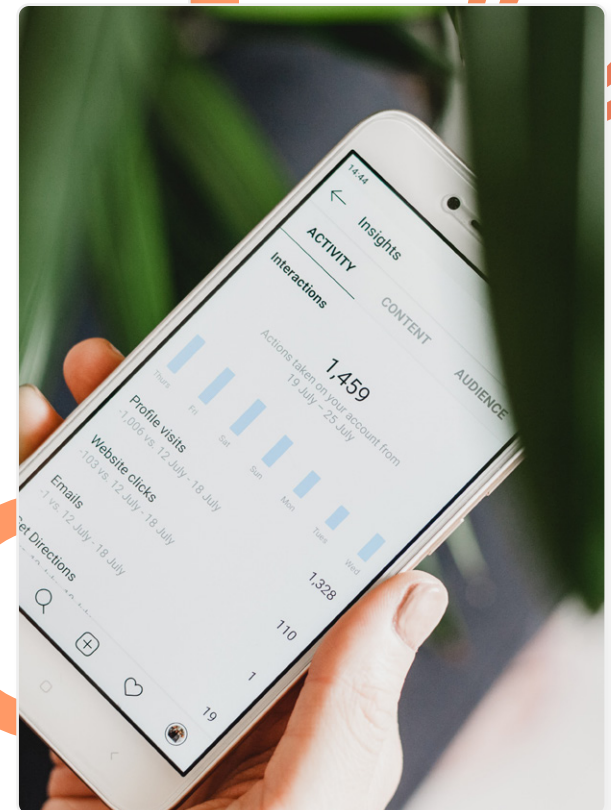
Community

If you invest time and resources into your business's Instagram account in order to increase brand awareness - *you obviously care about growing its presence.*

But in order to grow an Instagram community, you need to increase your followers consistently over time. However, this is easier said than done - especially in 2020.

According to digital strategist Jeff Bullas:

> **"** It's no secret that having more real followers on Instagram leads to higher engagement, website clicks, and sales for your business. But growing a following on Instagram is harder and more time-consuming than ever. **"**

Whether it's due to their sophisticated algorithm, or the fact that brands are getting more creative everyday, Instagram accounts are competing harder for the same eyeballs.

For this reason, you may not want to dedicate all of your efforts on growing your followers by ten-fold. Instead, **focus on getting a healthy but realistic follower growth while keeping your existing community engaged.**

According to our data this year, **more than 50% of Instagram followers have less than 1,000 followers (52.35%).** This suggests an increase from last year's 46.6%, giving us an idea of the amount of new accounts being created on the platform.

The next largest segment are users that have between 1,001 - 10,000 followers (37.41%) and together the two segments make up the majority of Instagram users.

Number of Instagram Followers

100001 - 500000
2.4%

50001 - 100000
2.5%

10001 - 50000
15.9%
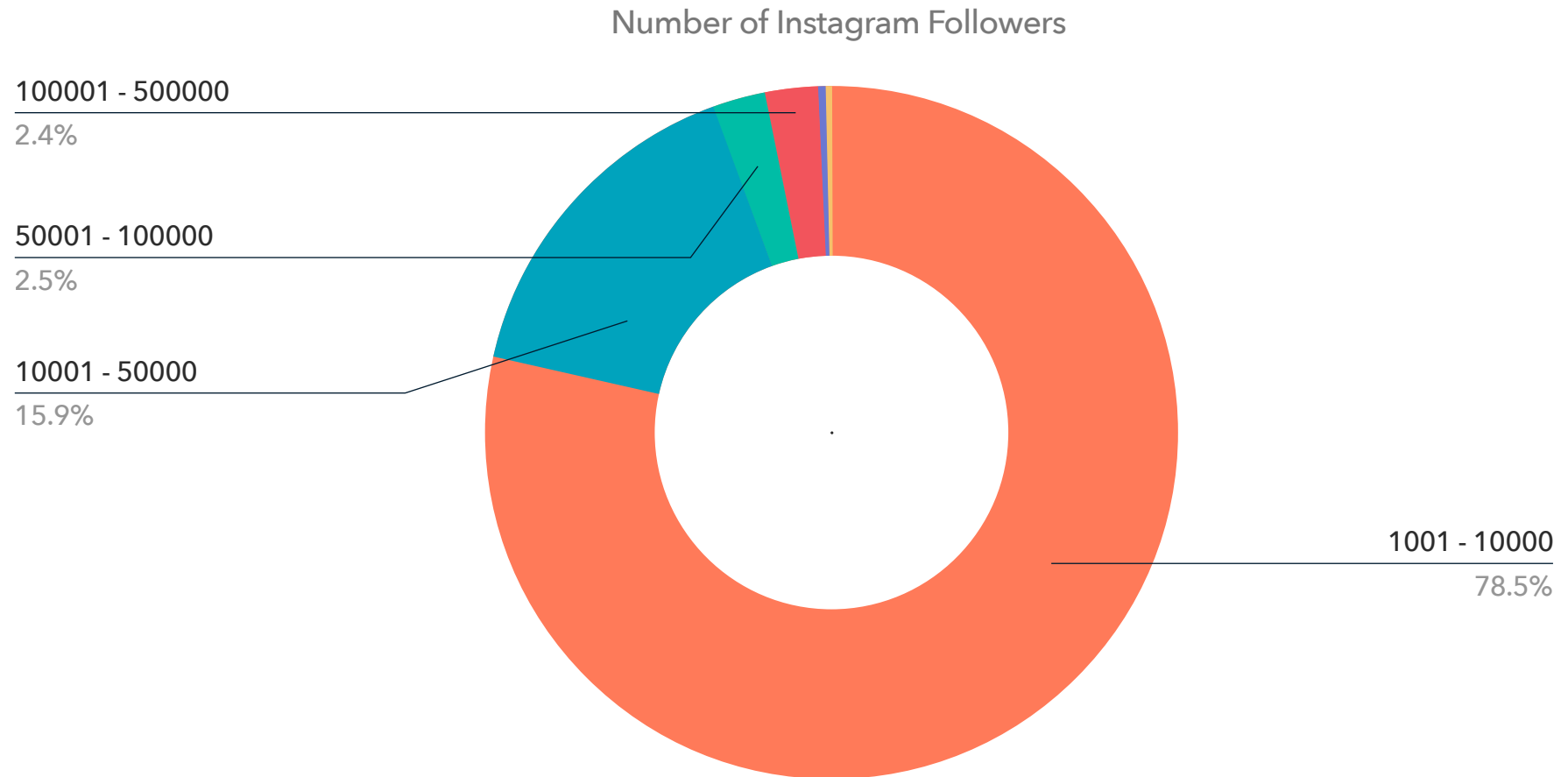
1001 - 10000
78.5%

A further 7.58% have 10,001 - 50,000 followers and only a mere 1.2% have 50,001 - 100,000 followers. Finally, the two smallest segments are users that have 100,001 - 1M+ followers, which makeup only 0.32% of total users. These would be your celebrities, global brands, and mega-influencers.
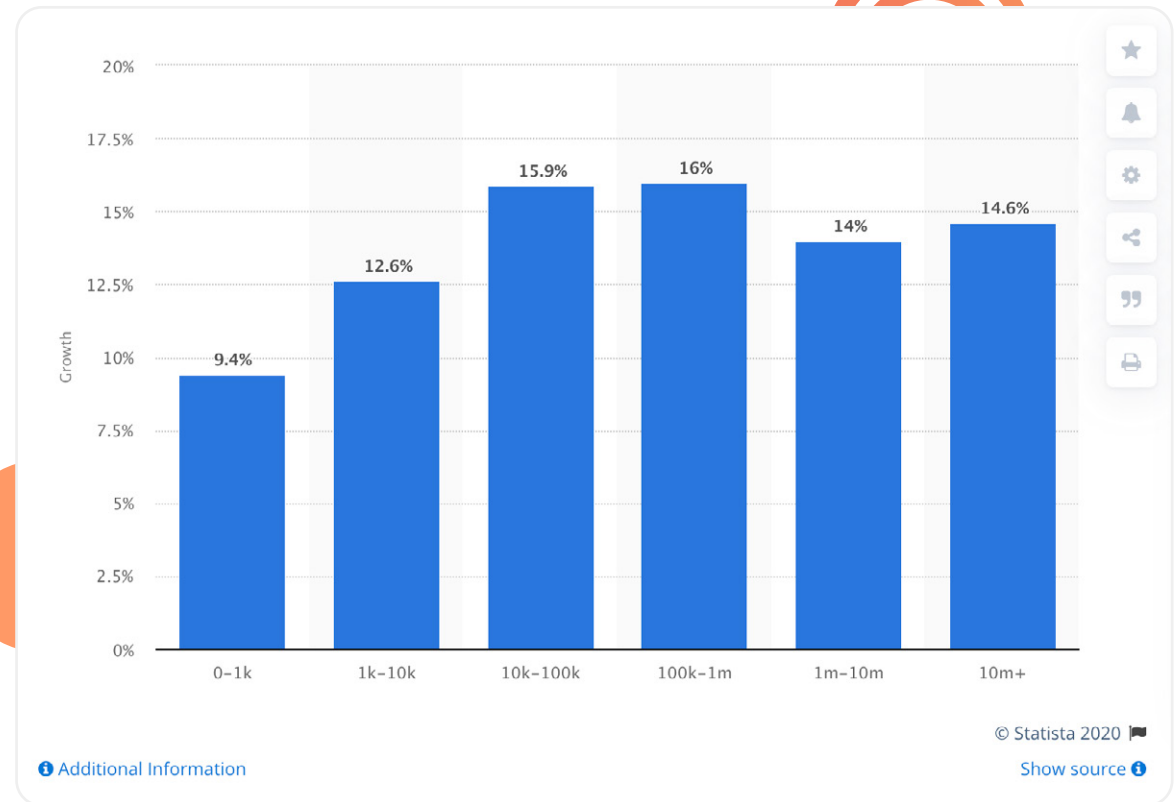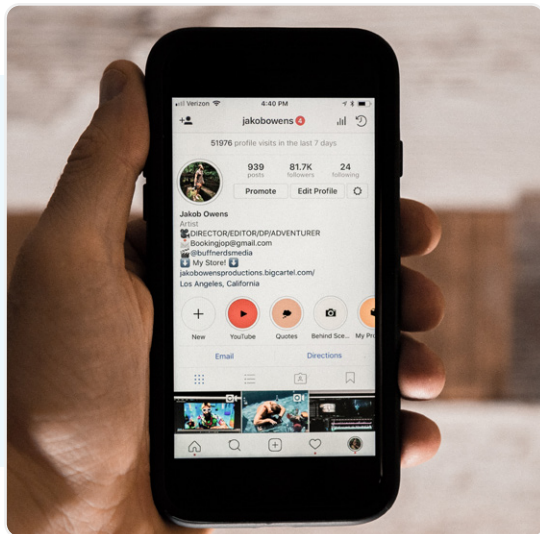
Worldwide Instagram follower growth rate from January to June 2019, by profile size

According to Statistia, accounts with 1,000 to 10,000 followers increased their followers on average by 12.6 percent.

You shouldn't be too concerned if your brand doesn't fall under the segments with the most number of followers. **Instead, aim to obtain a healthy follower growth rate based on your existing community size.**

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

Instagram is constantly changing but one thing is for certain: **growing your followers base will only get harder.** This doesn't mean that you should forgo all hope of getting followers organically and rely on buying new ones. Here are 5 things you can do to boost your follower growth:

1 **Ensure that your Instagram profile is complete.** This means filling out the bio thoroughly with relevant keywords to your business as well as creating IG Stories highlights.

2 **Post high-quality content consistently.** Post with intention: don't post content just for the sake of posting. Also, be sure to include a thorough caption - the detailed, the better.

3 **Be responsive and interact with your community.** Make sure you're replying to your followers' comments, direct messages, and follows. If you're being tagged in posts, respond to them.

4 **Collaborate with micro, nano-influencers, and partner brands.** Working with the right influencers and partners will boost your engagement much more effectively than trying to do it on your own.

5 **Post a good balance of different types of content.** This will include image posts, video posts, Stories, and even IGTV.

Influencers

Did you know what an 'influencer' was before Instagram? Most of us didn't.

In fact, **influencer marketing** wasn't recognized as a legit business strategy until Instagram helped to launch it into true game-changer. It became so successful that in a few short years, almost everyone and their pet chihuahuas became 'influencers'.

To give you an idea of the level of success it garnered: **influencer marketing on Instagram grew by over 48% in 2019**, according to a recent report from data analytics company Klear.
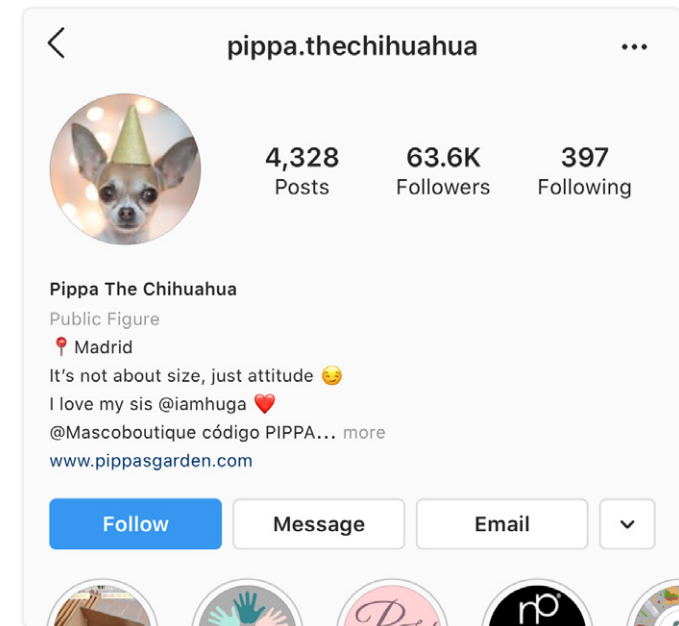
How did it become so effective? Simply put, influencers are able to penetrate the barriers of traditional advertising and allow brands to communicate them in a more authentic, less invasive way.

They create real connections by engaging with their audience with relevant content, which establishes a level of trust that businesses weren't able to gain by themselves.

However, this quick success also led skeptics to believe that influencer marketing was just one of those short-lived social media marketing trends that will eventually die out, as a result of the market becoming too competitive and expensive.

But despite the naysayers, influencers are proving that they're here to stay. In fact, it's projected to be bigger than ever in 2020, becoming an 8 billion dollar industry by the end of this year.
Influencer Marketing Hub

But where exactly is it headed? What do brands need to keep in mind to make sure that they're staying ahead of the game?

Let's look at the trends we discovered about Instagram influencers.

TYPES OF INSTAGRAM INFLUENCERS

Instagram users with 500k - 1M+ followers made up less than 0.5% of the total users.

These include your celebrities, big global brands, and highly influential users. Influencers of this scale can have a huge reach, but **collaborating with them can also come with other issues such as exorbitant prices, fake followers, and them working with a number of your competitors.**

According to Talking Influence:

" In the early days of influencer marketing, brands were obsessed with finding collaborators with the biggest following possible. They thought that the wider reach the campaign got, the better result they were able to achieve. Marketers realised it wasn't the number of eyes on an influencer post or ad, it was about having the right eyes on that ad. That's what drove big results. "

What's more, it appears that highly coveted celebrity endorsers like the Kardashian-Jenners, "...will become less relevant for influencer campaigns."

Influencer Marketing Hub

HubSpot | mention

Businesses are starting to see the differences between working with celebrities and mega-influencers versus their lesser known counterparts - **also known as micro and nano-influencers.**

Users with 1k - 100k followers make up almost half of the total Instagram user base - with micro-influencers representing most of this segment.

While there is some debate around the number of followers that micro-influencer should have, it generally floats around the 5k - 100k followers size.

Types of Influencers

52.4%
37.4%
7.6%

● 0-1k ● 1k -10k ● 10k-50k ● 50k-100k ● 100k - 500k ● 500k-1M ● 1M+

While there is some debate around the number of followers that micro-influencer should have, it generally floats around the 5k - 100k followers size.

We highlighted in our report last year the importance and benefits of working with micro-influencers vs. a mega-influencer: essentially, *"an enthusiastic micro-influencer, with a smaller, but keen and dedicated following, provides better value for money."*
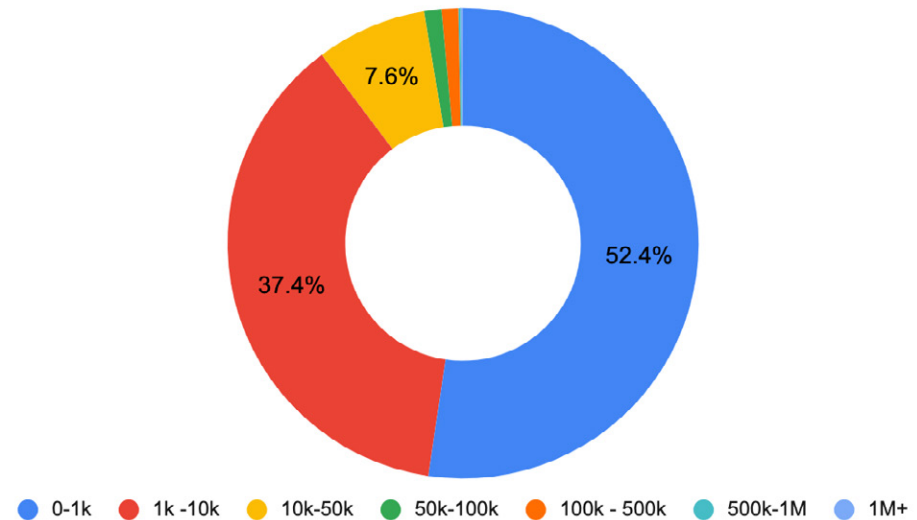
What's more, micro-influencers are experts of their niche and more personally invested in their online presence. They spend a lot of time creating high-quality content, reading comments, and addressing inquiries from their followers personally.

For these reasons, many brands that are on top of their influencer marketing game are already working with micro-influencers, which drives their prices up and makes the market more competitive.

As a result, smart businesses are going *even smaller.*

> **Nano-influencers** — are Instagram users who have between 1,000 and 5,000 followers. Their accounts are neither glamorous nor polished, photos are neither posed nor retouched with dozens of filters. They give the feeling of being a 'guy next door.'

Average Engagement Rate on Instagram

Number of followers	Average ER
>1M	1.97%
100K—1M	2.05%
20K—100K	2.15%
5K—20K	2.43%
1K—5K	5.60%
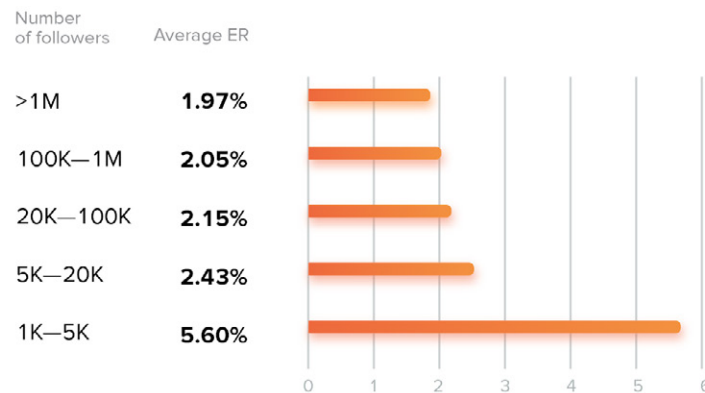
HypeAuditor | The State of Influencer Marketing 2019

HypeAuditor

Here are five reasons why nano-influencers can be even more effective for brands to work with:

1. They have the highest engagement rate

2. They're much more accessible

3. They can reach super-niche audiences

4. They get you the most bang for your buck

5. Working with them can be easier and more realistic to scale

Essentially, nano-influencers are ordinary people who are breaking into a niche and looking for exposure. This makes them much more willing and accessible to work with brands, especially lesser-known ones. According to the recent State of Influencer Marketing 2019 by HypeAuditor:

> **The engagement rate of nano-influencers is twice as high as that of other groups of influencers. Engagement rate has a huge impact on reach, the higher the ER the more an influencer's followers will see a sponsored post. That means that they have higher reachability, thus the cost per impression and engagement would be much lower.**

They also dedicate their time to grow small but highly-engaged communities: really listening to their audiences, interacting with them and ensuring that the content they're creating is relevant.

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

Influencer marketing on Instagram isn't going anywhere, and there's no time like the present for your brand to start experimenting if you've never worked with one before.

Keep in mind that it's always better to start small, even if you have a large budget to work with.

This means taking your time to research micro and nano influencers who really fit your brand and will resonate with your message. Don't be afraid to work with multiple people at the same time in order to find the right ones.

A good place to start looking for them is by reaching out to your partners, clients, and complimentary brands in your industry. There are also various tools and agencies who can help you identify the right influencers, but the best kind of reassurance will be from word of mouth.

Last but not least, due to the gradual removal of public 'likes' you may want to move away from placing too much focus on it in your influencer campaigns.

According to Later, instead of looking at likes, brands looking to work with influencers should **"focus on actual impressions and brand match,"** as well as the **"number and quality of comments."**

Location

Location tagging on Instagram is a feature that has been around for some time, and there are a number of reasons why people would include a geotag to their posts.

For starters, **the platform is a huge resource for discovering new products, travel destinations, retail businesses, and restaurants.**

When you tag your post with a location, it has the potential to show up when an user searches the location name or keyword under 'Places'.
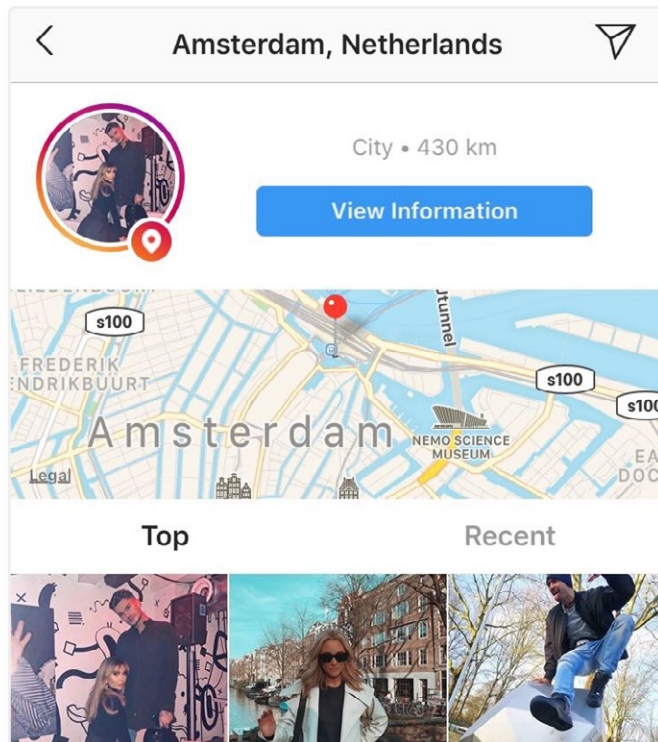
This can be extremely beneficial for local businesses to help increase their exposure: Social Report

> **"** Posts with a tagged location result in 79% higher engagement than posts without a tagged location. **"**

This can work especially well when combined with influencer marketing.

Think about the following example: You follow tons of foodies on Instagram. You're travelling to London, UK and looking to check out the most trendy restaurants. Naturally, you'd check out local London IG foodies' feeds to see what scrumptious photos they've posted. Once you've set eyes on a few dishes based on their photos and description - you're sure to click on the tagged location to get names of the restaurant.

What's more, people love to tag places they are at, which is how the whole concept of 'checking in' and Foursquare was originally built around.

Let's take a look at the trends around tagged locations.

MOST TAGGED CITY

According to our data, the most tagged city in the world is Los Angeles, California.

In fact, LA not only beat out some of the biggest cities in the world such as Paris and London, but it also topped its east coast rival, New York - which followed closely as the number two contender.

However, being the most tagged city in the world doesn't necessarily mean it's the most loved.

Let's look at the top tagged city with the highest average engagement.
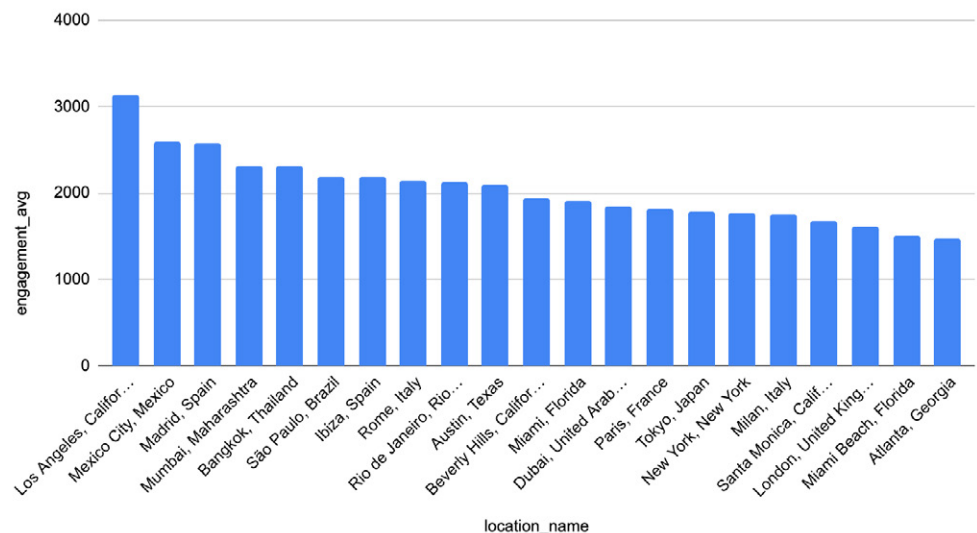
TOP TAGGED CITY WITH HIGHEST ENGAGEMENT

LA comes out on top in terms of engagement as well, meaning that Instagram posts that are tagged with the city location are not only the most used but also receive the highest engagement.

Does this then cement the claim that 'the west coast' really is 'the best coast'? We'll leave that up for debate.

Frequency vs. City tagged
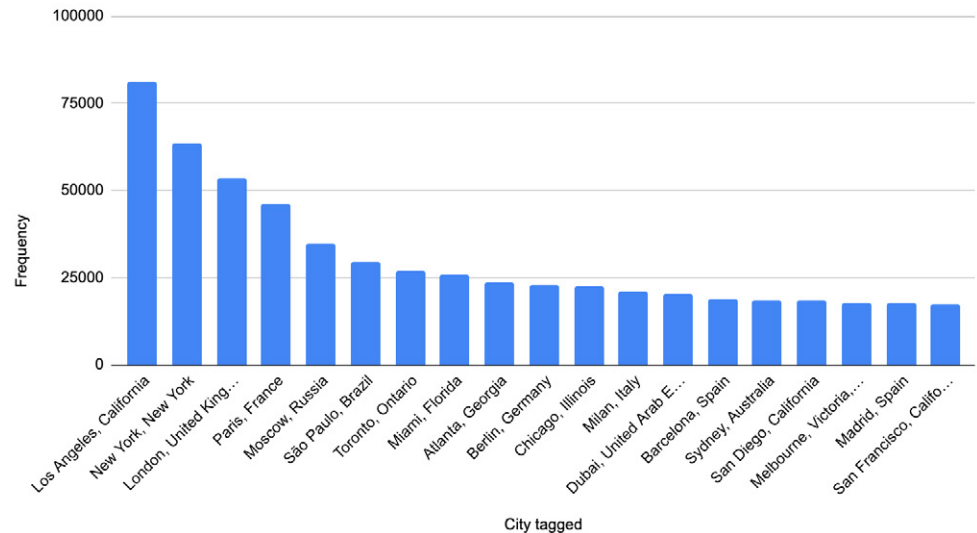
### Average engagement vs. City

TAGGED LOCATION WITH HIGHEST ENGAGEMENT

If we only looked at the engagement of a tagged location and ignored how often it was tagged, which location do you think would come out on top?

Not surprisingly, it's the mecca of music festivals and selfies - Coachella, California.

In fact, it would be pretty unlikely for someone to attend the infamous music festival, post on Instagram, and *not* tag the location.

Average Engagement vs. Location
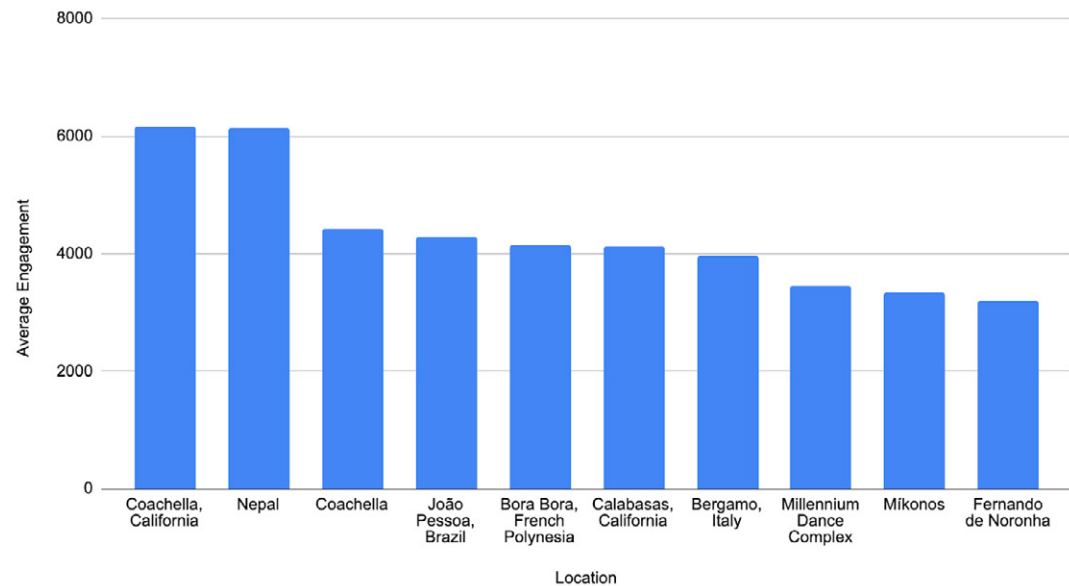
Dubbed the 'Influencer Olympics', Coachella is a place to see and to be *seen*. Influencers are working hard throughout the event as it's a huge opportunity to sell their image and lifestyle.

This could explain the high engagement as they are amongst so many other influencers at the same festival, competing for every like and comment: "...clicks and attention are now as important as money, in terms of currency." (Joe)
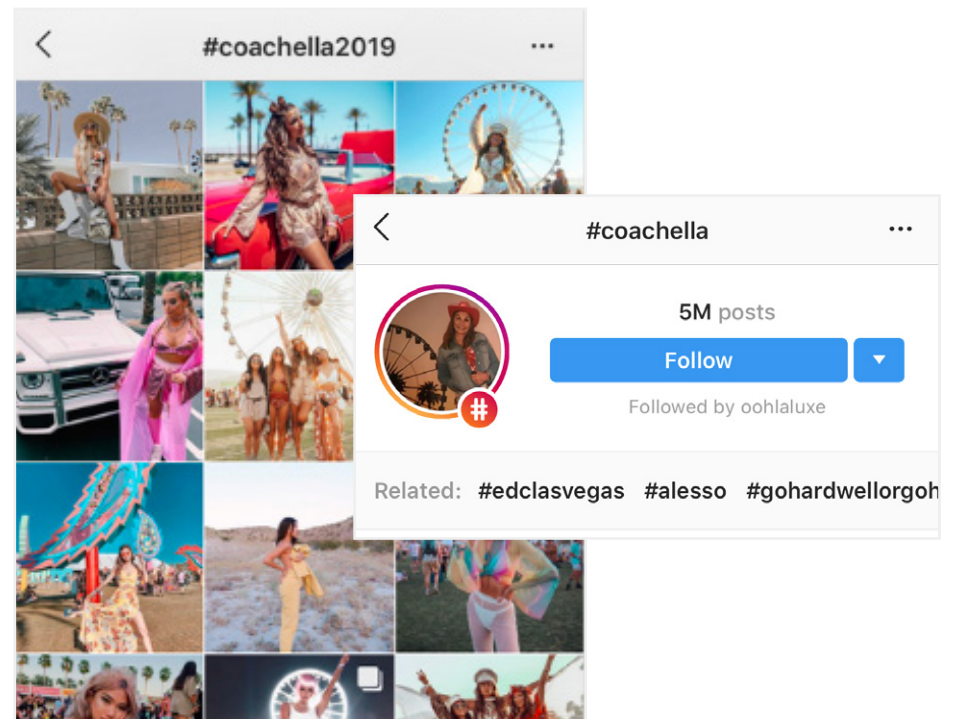
KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

Adding a location to your Instagram posts can be highly beneficial for local businesses.

As the platform is a huge source of inspiration for discovering new trends and 'it' spots, location tagging can only boost your exposure and brand engagement. So include your whereabouts where you can across your content: in your image posts, video, and in Stories.

If you don't already have one, be sure to create a specific location tag for your business. Once people start to check into it, you'll be able to see all of the posts tagged with it and see what your community is saying about you.
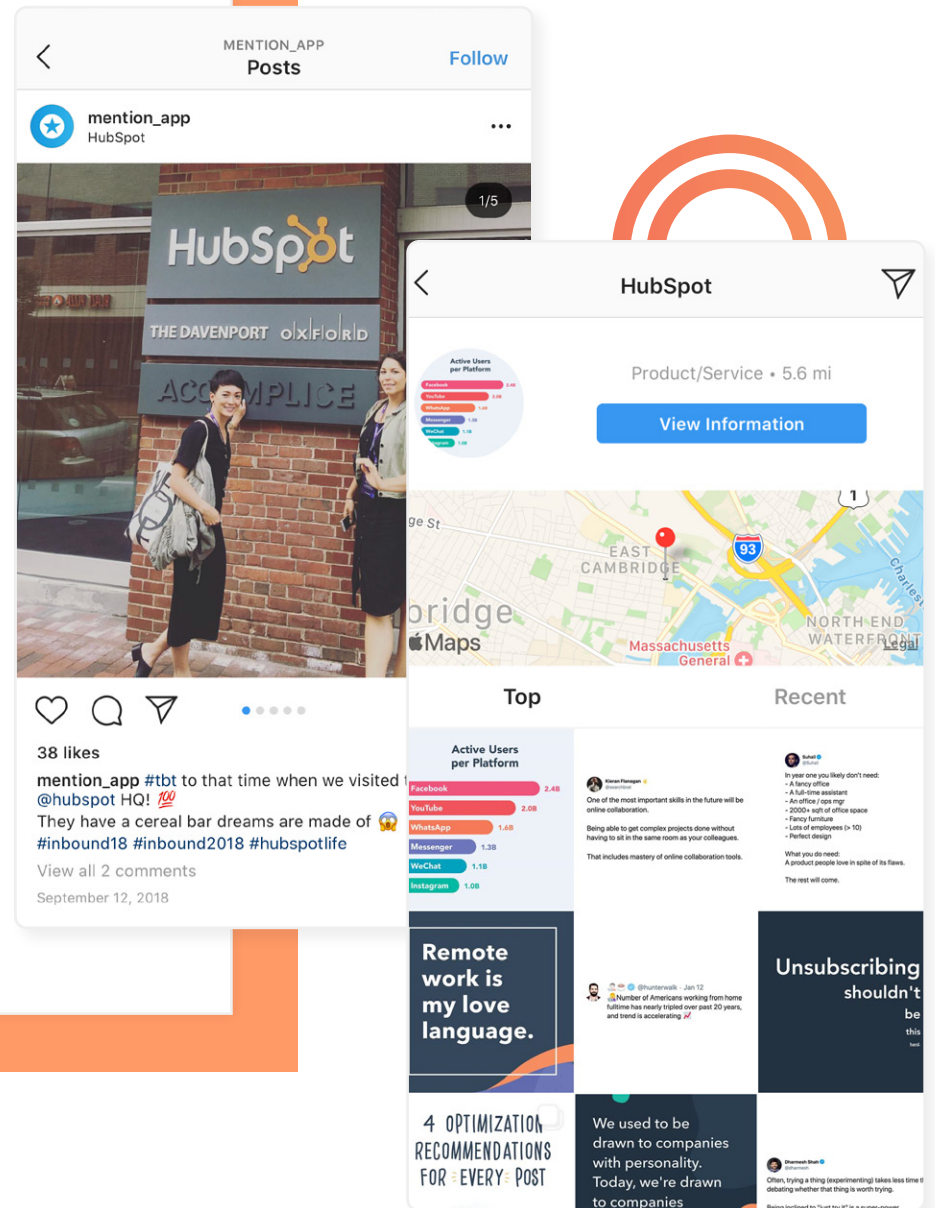
Captions

It has been said a picture is worth a thousand words. So why do we spend so much time coming up with the perfect Instagram caption?

Captions can help you encourage more engagement on your post including likes, comments, and even drive conversions to your offer and your website.

What's more, captions have the ability to provide more context and help your audience understand your brand and products better.

It sounds like the more detailed and thorough your caption is, the better engagement you will receive in your post.

But as Shakespeare famously once said: 'brevity is the soul of wit' - is this true when it comes to Instagram caption length?

Later

" A great Instagram caption will stop a scroller in their tracks — and the longer someone spends reading your caption and engaging with your post, the better your post will rank with the Instagram algorithm! **"**
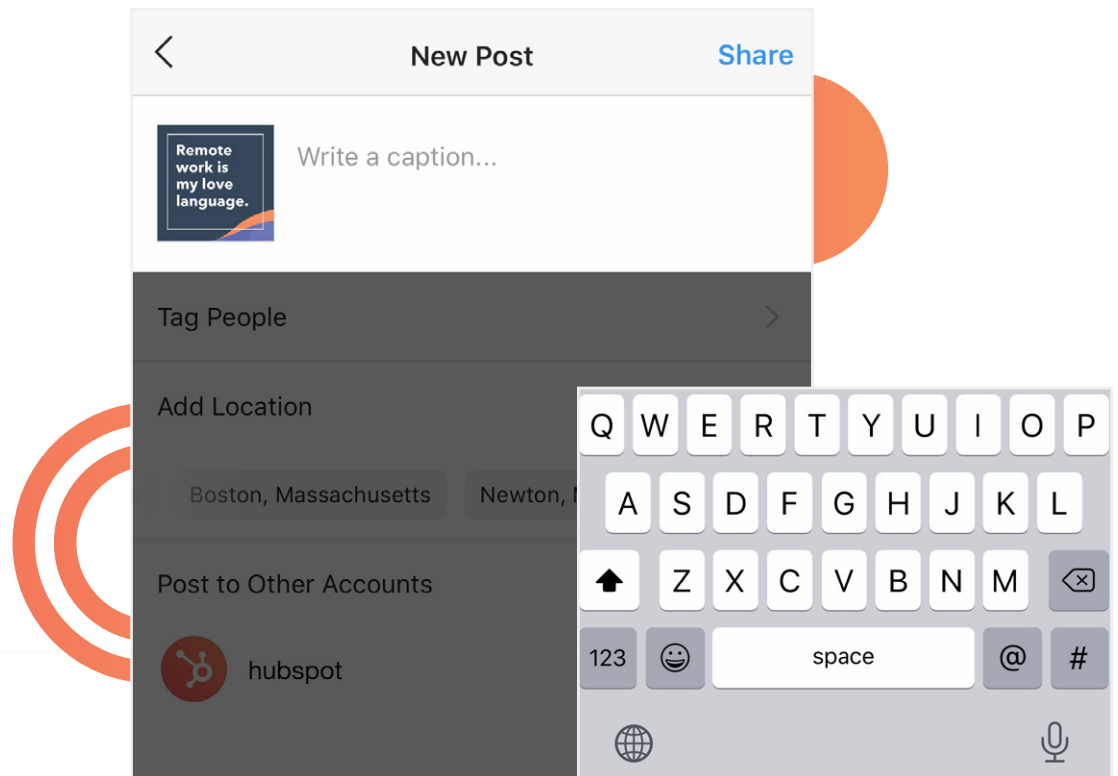
CAPTION LENGTH VS. ENGAGEMENT

According to our data, the results are quite the contrary. We found that the longer your caption is, the better engagement it received. For this section, we looked at the median engagement instead of the average, as posts from highly influential profiles would have skewed the average.

This is because celebrities and mega-influencers can often include one word or just a single emoji as a caption, but still would receive very high engagement on their post.
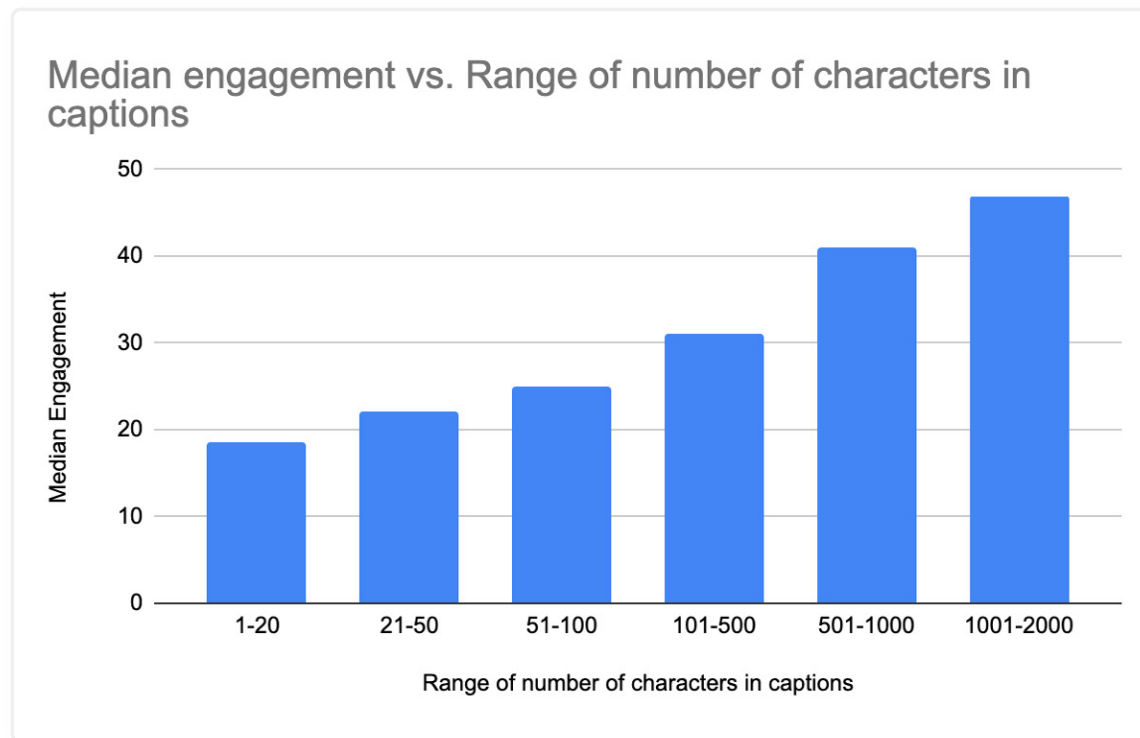
Currently, Instagram allows up to 2,200 characters long and can contain up to 30 hashtags in the whole post. But according to Social Report, the platform recommends for you to *"...keeping your captions under 125 characters. This ensures that your entire caption shows up in the Instagram feed."*

But this doesn't necessarily help you if your goal is to have your readers engage with your captions for as long as possible.

Based on our data and findings from several other companies, we're definitely seeing the trend of engaging caption length in the 500 - 1000 and 1000 - 2000 characters range.

Median engagement vs. Range of number of characters in captions

*includes hashtags

> **"** ...for brands and influencers, lengthy captions that champion story-telling and authenticity are driving great results... [they] are great because they allow your audience to learn more about you, your brand, and your mission. **"**

Keep in mind that in this case your caption consists of the 30 hashtags you're allowed to include, so that would take up quite a few characters if you're including the recommended 5 to 6.
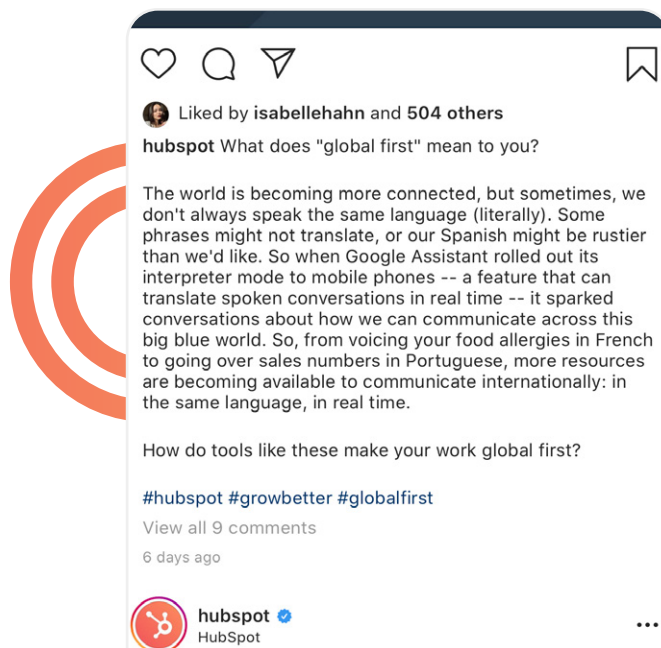
KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

At the end of the day, create your caption with thought and intention: think about what you're really trying to tell your followers.

While we're seeing the trend of longer captions resulting in higher engagement - don't drag it out just for the sake of adding length.

Longer captions are made for storytelling and helping your audience understand your brand better. So use them when they're appropriate and you have something important to say.

If you get into a habit of writing super long captions each time you post, this might deter you from posting consistently - which can also impact your overall engagement.
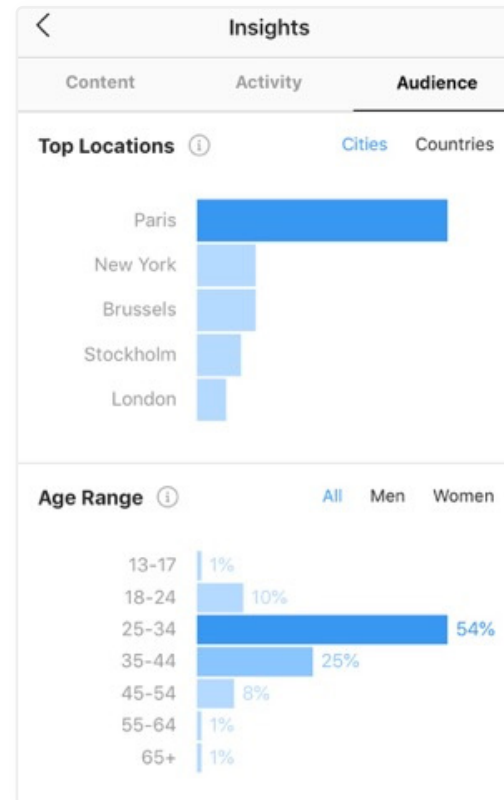
Time

As Instagram is constantly changing its engagement algorithm, users, and businesses in particular - are always trying to find ways to outsmart it.

When it comes to what time to post at in order to get the highest engagement, keep in mind that there is no simple, universal answer. There are a number of studies out there, each with their own take on what the prime times are to post.

So before you follow recommendations of one particular study, take a look at the behavior of your audience and take a few factors into account including:

- Where the bulk of your followers are geographically

- What day/times they are the most active

- The industry you're in

Note that you'll need to have an Instagram business or a creator profile to access Instagram Insights.

Later

> **"** Since Instagram is now prioritizing "new" content on people's feeds, your best shot at getting your content in front of your followers is by posting when most of them are actively scrolling the app. **"**

Let's look at the trends around time and engagement.

TIME POSTED WITH HIGHEST AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT

We'll look at the median engagement rate of posts based on the hour they are posted instead of the average.

The reason for this is so it's not skewed by a small percentage of very large or very small values, thus giving a more accurate 'typical' representation. Think of it like how you'd determine the typical salary of a population: the very few highest gainers will impact the average, so the median salary will be more representative of what is 'typical'.

Based on the median engagement, we'd suggest that you post at 12PM in your local time.

Median engagement vs. Hour posted

Another factor to consider about posting time related to the type of business you are. If your brand is a lifestyle, restaurant, travel or blogging business, your audience could likely be more active on weekends or during non 'office' hours.

If you're a B2B or a SaaS brand, chances are your followers will engage with your posts more during weekdays.

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

The best thing to do to figure out when to post is to first dive into your Instagram insights.
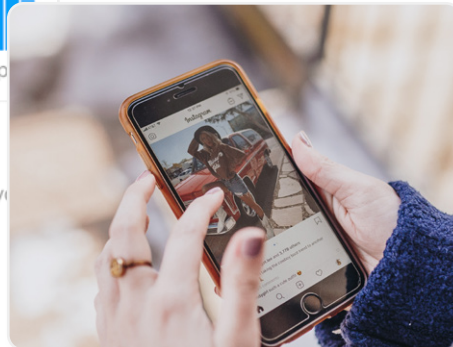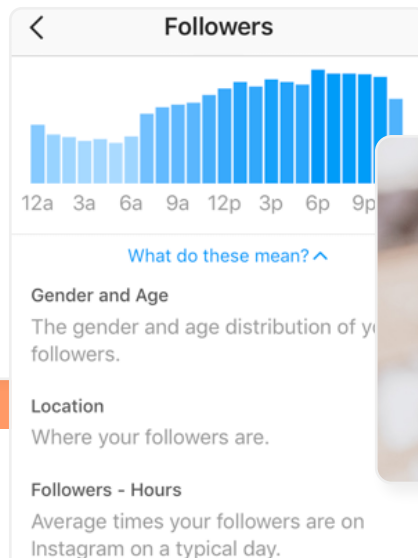
There, you'll get an idea of where most of your followers are geographically, and what times they are most active.

Based on these insights, you can take into account from a few different studies what the best time is to post in those key regions and create a time range to post. Experimenting by posting at different time ranges over a period of weeks or months and document the different results you get engagement wise.

Lastly, keep in mind of these golden Instagram posting rules to ensure that your content is created for optimum engagement:

- Post consistently

- Post high-quality content that is relevant to your audience

- Be sure to write well thought-out captions

- Be responsive to comments

The timing factor won't be the be-all-end-all when it comes to how much engagement your post receives, but you'll still want to be aware of what can favor the platform's algorithm.

Followers

12a 3a 6a 9a 12p 3p 6p 9p

What do these mean? ⌃

Gender and Age
The gender and age distribution of your followers.

Location
Where your followers are.

Followers - Hours
Average times your followers are on Instagram on a typical day.

Instagram Stories

Known for being one of the most innovative social networks, Instagram did something that was completely uncalled for back in 2016: *it copied the most popular feature from its biggest rival - Snapchat.*

Debuting a 15-second video diary feature extremely similar to Snapchat Stories, Instagram Stories was born and no one anticipated how successful it would become in a short time. In fact, it doubled the number of Snapchat's daily active users less than two years (CNBC), gaining 400 million daily users by 2018.
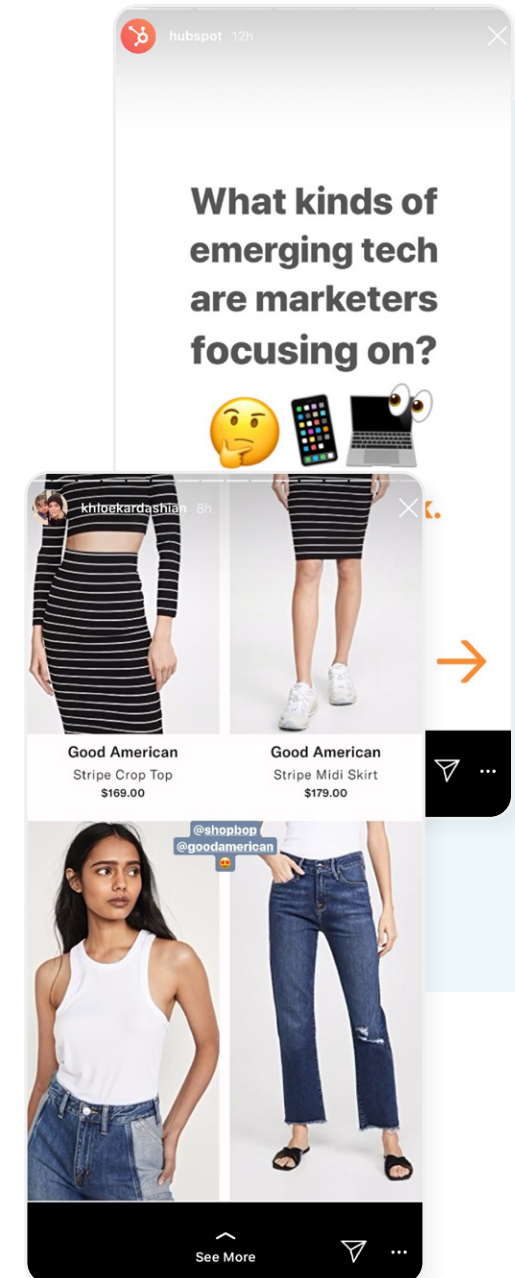
Now, with over 500 million DAU, Instagram has proven that it was able to reinvent itself by pivoting from a meticulously curated photo sharing app to something that was more spontaneous and authentic.

What's more, IG Stories isn't slowing down. It continues to roll out powerful features to help businesses grow their presence.

Smart brands are realizing the potential of Stories and taking advantage of its sales and conversion features such as ads, chat stickers, product stickers, swipe-up links, and more.

So what's next in store for Stories? Judging by its rapidly-growing high usage and engagement rate, all signs are pointing to the feature becoming bigger than ever.

We decided to conduct our own survey to understand the usage behavior and trends around Stories.

Here are some interesting statistics that we've gathered from a selected portion of Instagram power users in our database.

Stories for personal accounts

37% of users surveyed post to Instagram Stories on their personal account **more than once per week**

58% of users surveyed watch personal Instagram Stories **multiple times a day**

19% of users surveyed **watch Stories from beginning to end**

26% of users surveyed **comment on, or share personal Instagram Stories they watch**

These statistics show that Instagram is super effective engaging with users via Stories first from a personal usage standpoint. Users are not only consuming and interacting with content consistently but actively creating content regularly as well.

Stories for business

22% of users surveyed **watch branded Stories (from a company, business, or brand) more than once a week**

67% of users surveyed of users surveyed **have 'swiped up' on the links of branded Stories**

20% of users surveyed post to Instagram Stories on their business account **more than once a week**

44% of users surveyed use Instagram Stories **to promote products or services**

11% of users surveyed have **included a link in their branded Stories to a shoppable page**

36% of users surveyed have **liked, commented, or shared a branded Stories**

These stats indicate that IG business accounts as well as consumers are adopting and engaging with branded Stories at a high rate.
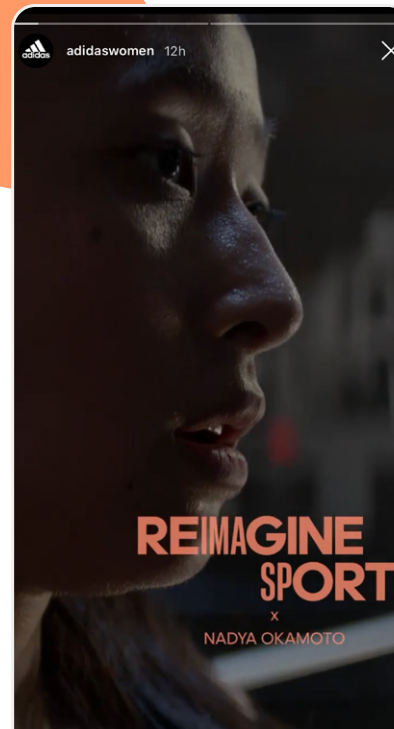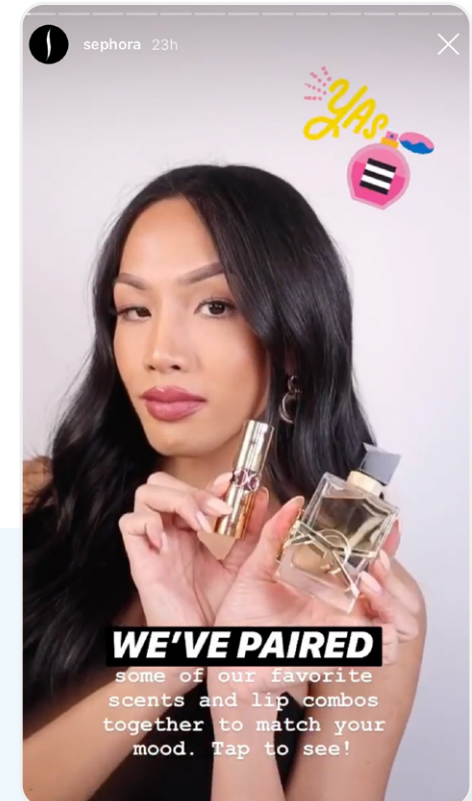
According to Instagram, one-third of the most viewed Instagram Stories are from businesses.

99firms

❝ While non-business users may use Insta Stories to express creativity and connect with family and friends, IG businesses leverage Stories to increase engagement rates, conversions, and their overall visibility on social media. **❞**

Since Stories users were so engaged with content from personal accounts, this made it very easy and natural for businesses to incorporate their branded content into feeds. It felt more authentic and less invasive than conventional branded content.
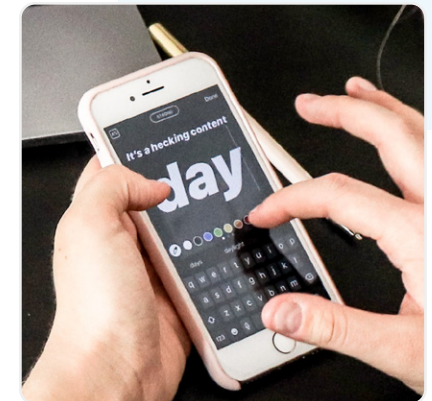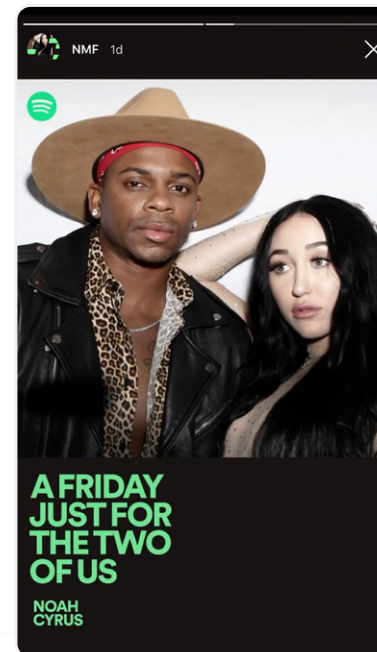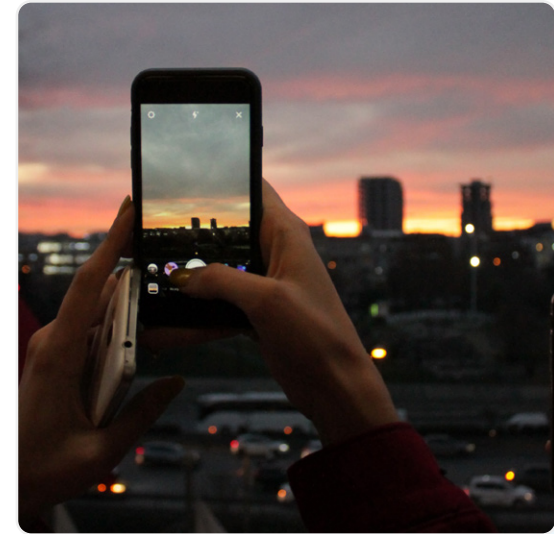
KEY TAKEAWAY FOR MARKETERS

If your brand hasn't incorporated Stories into your Instagram strategy yet, there's no time like the present to start experimenting. With the high engagement and conversion rates on branded Stories, you'll be missing out on a good chunk of the population if you decide that it's just a 'nice to have'.

When you do start creating branded Stories, keep these best practices in mind:

1 **Don't aim for perfection** - Stories are meant to be spontaneous, authentic, and imperfect, so don't spend too much time editing them.

2 **Make Stories engaging** - interact with your audience by incorporating polls, stickers, emojis sliders, questions, quizzes, and more.

3 **Experiment and leverage business features** - Instagram created tons of features to help brands convert their audiences' interest into action, so try out product stickers, in-Story links, swipe-ups, and ads.

4 **Repurpose existing content** - you don't need to spend a lot of time coming up with new content for Stories. Look at your most popular blog posts or branded videos and think of how you can rework them for this format.

5 **Highlight your products in action or behind the scenes** - Show people how your products can be used and how they're made to help tell your brand story.

6 **Show off the human side of your brand** - Stories are all about authenticity, so highlight your brand's culture and what makes your company more than just a business.

More Statistics

Here are some more compelling Instagram statistics that could help you shape your strategy for 2020.

Instagram has 1 billion monthly active users

Instagram

64% of Users Are Between 18 and 34 years old

Statistia

52% of Instagram users are females and 42% are male

Omnicore

Influencer marketing grew by 48% in 2019

Klear

There Are 8+ Million Business Accounts

Adweek

84% of Instagram influencers are female

Social Media Today

7 out of 10 hashtags are branded

Omnicore

500 million users now use Instagram Stories every day

99 Firms

One third of the most viewed stories come from businesses

Instagram

Instagram's revenue is expected to reach 14+ billion dollars

Statistia

HubSpot | mention

HubSpot

Manage all of your social media accounts right from HubSpot's Social Media tool. Publish content, monitor mentions and keywords, and analyze key metrics.

Learn more

mention

Learn more about what is being said about your brand, industry, and competitors on social media and beyond. Mention is the leading solution that enables brands and agencies to monitor the web, listen to their audience and manage social media.

Learn more