

Blog-Fire Method: Niche Hacks for Instagram

How to Adapt Your Brand and Niche for Ultimate Instagram Engagement

Instagram is one of the fastest growing social networking sites. With Instagram, users can post their pictures online with a bit of commentary. The pictures are often taken with a smartphone and uploaded to their account.

Instagram also has several filters, so users can edit or decorate their photos as they like. But besides the social networking aspect of Instagram, it's a great marketing tool that you'll want to take advantage of.

Some people use the social network as a way to let people build trust in them and get to know them. It's a method of showcasing your personal and/or professional world. Brands can use Instagram to showcase products and build a following that way.

But let's go over a few specific niches and discuss some tips for leveraging this image-based social network and see what you can apply to your own efforts on the site.

Instagram for the Health Niche

There are many ways that you can use Instagram if you're in the health niche. Fitness pictures are always popular on Instagram - and if you're in this niche, then you know how important it is that you don't just talk the talk, but that you show it, too.

Your pictures don't have to be about your six pack abs. You can take a selfie as you're working out at your local gym or on equipment that you have at home. This is a great way to remind people that you take your health seriously and motivate them to hit the gym, too - with the products that you're promoting.

Some marketers upload photos of their yoga or Pilates poses while others share pictures of their outdoor runs or walks around the neighborhood. The important thing here is to share your love of fitness with your followers.

Also popular on Instagram are photos that are designed to motivate people. These types of images are sometimes called 'fitspirational' photos. They inspire your followers to take better care of their own bodies.

When you post these photos, add a short personal message below the photo. These can be photos of you losing weight or of what you're doing - or products that you're using to lose weight.

For example, you might post a picture of your healthy breakfast meal with a caption about how clean eating gives you more energy and makes you feel stronger and sexier. You can also post food facts to your Instagram account.

Pick a food and share its benefit with your followers. You could post a picture of carrots from the produce section of your grocery store with a caption about the fact that carrots are a great source of Vitamin A, which is essential for healthy eyesight.

But you don't have to just mention foods that are good for your body. You can also mention foods that are *bad* for your body. For example, you could post a picture of canned meats and share with your followers that processed meats tend to be high in sodium, which cause your body to hold onto excess water.

You can also share general health tips. For example, you could take a picture of yourself cuddling with your pet and mention that people with pets tend to be healthier and live longer.

This is a great way to personalize your photos while still delivering useful information to your followers. Your subscribers will often share your images with others who are also focused on the same health issue.

Instagram for the Food Niche

If you're in the food niche, there are many types of pictures that you can post. You could share behind-the-scenes photos as you prepare your meals. You might want to grab a shot of the grill as you put your hamburgers on or a boiling pot as you add noodles.

You don't have to document every step of your process, but do take a couple of photos. This lets your followers feel like they're with you in your kitchen. When you're finished cooking, snap a photo of your plate before you start to eat.

The best food pictures usually have brightly colored foods in them. Carrots, tomatoes, and other brightly colored foods photograph well. You can also make your food photos more interesting by using different plates.

It's important that you pay attention to food portions when picking plates. If you put too little food on a large plate, it may not look appealing to your followers. But small plates are easy to fill and the serving size will look much bigger.

This doesn't mean that you can't use large plates. If you do decide to use a larger plate, just remember to add more food to it than you normally would. Don't be afraid to go beyond the plates, though.

You can set your entire table to make your food pictures look really interesting. Before you snap your photo, look over your setting. If you have too many colors, your photo might feel busy and followers may just scroll right past it.

For the best photos, you want your food or food related products to be the focal point. Remember, your place settings should enhance your photo, not detract from it. You can also keep photos visually interesting by trying different camera angles. Most people just take an aerial photo of their food.

A good thing about Instagram is that you don't have to make your Instagram account about cooking in general. You can narrow it down to a specific niche - like gluten-free foods, cooking for kids, low calorie meals, sugar free desserts, or any other angle that you like.

Don't be afraid to do this, because many marketers grow their Instagram following a lot faster by narrowing their marketing down to a specific niche within the overall food industry rather than keeping it broad and trying to attract everyone.

Instagram for the Beauty and Anti-Aging Niche

Instagram is a great tool for marketers that are in beauty or anti-aging niches. There are many different types of photos that you can post and ways that you can grab attention. You can share makeup tips, before and after photos of your skin care regimen, or how-to instructions for hair care.

Just like with the food niche on Instagram, you may have more success reaching followers if you narrow down your niche. You can focus on posting makeup tips for women over 40, anti-aging tricks for men, nail art for teens, or skin treatments for senior citizens.

Whatever you do, pick a narrow focus that you enjoy. If you hate spending time at the salon or despise nail art, don't pick nail care as your niche. Your followers will be able to tell that you're not enthusiastic about nail care and you can't get people excited about stuff that doesn't excite you.

Another use for Instagram photos is to promote your favorite products and earn money as an affiliate. Start by capturing a shot of a product that you use in real life - like the eye cream you use to hide the circles under your eyes or the firming lotion you've successfully used to help with your cellulite.

Post a picture to Instagram with your URL in the caption area. But keep in mind that Instagram doesn't allow their users to have clickable links. This means that if someone wants to visit your link, they can't click through.

They'll have to manually type your link into their address bar. So, you'll want to make your links easy to remember by using a shortening service like Bit.ly or Goo.gl. However, some affiliate programs don't allow you to shorten links.

One way to get around this is to create a post on your blog that's all about the product you love. Within the post, you should hyperlink to the product once or twice. Then post the blog post URL in your Instagram caption.

Remember to keep your URL simple and easy to recall or use one of the link shorteners above. You can also look up popular events or dates in the beauty industry to find ideas that you can post about.

For example, August is National Hair Loss Awareness Month. During this month, you can share tips on how to keep your hair healthy, advice about what to do if you're losing your hair already, or reminders about which vitamin deficiencies can cause premature hair loss.

Like many other photo apps, Instagram allows you to apply various filters to your photos. These filters can be helpful when it comes to editing your photo. One filter can help darken a photo that was taken in a very bright room.

Another filter can lighten photos or blur the background of your photo. But filters go beyond that. You can adjust the color tone to hide dark circles under your eyes or focus the photo on your lips instead of that acne outbreak on your chin.

Now in the beauty industry, you want to be careful about applying too many of these filters. Followers may distrust you if they feel you're trying to Photoshop the results of your beauty images.

So if you didn't edit a photo and want to let your followers know that, use the #nofilter hashtag. That means it's raw and real, and users are attracted to that.

Instagram for the Technology Niche

There's good news if you're in the technology niche, because Instagram has a large following of people interested in tech related products and information. You can post photos of your favorite gadgets - like your preferred brand of laptop or tablet.

There are plenty of fans on Instagram who will follow you just because you share an interest in the same brands. You'll want to make sure that you go beyond posting about your favorite brands so that you capture even more followers.

One popular tag on Instagram is *hacks*. In this case, hacks are not about taking control of someone else's device or releasing viruses that damage computers. Instead, users

on Instagram use the hashtag *hacks* to showcase how they're using technology to make their lives easier.

For example, one user might post on Instagram about using a specialized cable to communicate between devices with two different operating systems. Instagram is also a good platform that you can use to share technology news.

Whether it's details about the latest Apple product or rumors about the latest Android device that's to be released soon, you can share this information in real time with thousands of other Instagram users.

Some marketers also use Instagram to share screenshots of what they're working on. For example, if you'll be releasing the newest version of your software product, grab a screenshot and post it on Instagram.

This can help build excitement for your upcoming product. But be careful what you grab in your screenshot. You don't want to accidentally add any sensitive account information that shouldn't be shared.

Wearable technology is another thing you could post about on your Instagram account. For example, take a selfie with your activity tracker on before and after your activity. Show your followers how many steps you walked today with your fitness device.

If you're an affiliate for a large retailer like Amazon or Wal-Mart, make sure you include a short link to the device so that your followers can order one if they decide they like yours.

You can also use your Instagram account to compare several different devices. Maybe you want to illustrate the difference between your Samsung Galaxy tablet and your spouse's Kindle tablet.

You can take the photos then create a collage using a third party app like PicFrame. Once you're done, upload your photo to Instagram, as usual. Another Instagram feature you might want to take advantage of is their video uploading.

Instagram users can now record and upload their own videos. But Instagram only allows you to have fifteen second clips. However, this can be the perfect amount of time to show off an app you've been working on or a quick tutorial on how to find where your downloaded files are stored on your tablet.

Just like photos, you can apply filters to your Instagram videos. If you want to tag another user, you'll have to tag them with the @ symbol, then their username in the comments section of your video.

Instagram for the Travel Niche

Another industry that's very popular on Instagram is the travel niche. You can post photos of countries you're visiting or have visited recently. Followers enjoy feeling like they're on the journey with you, so if at all possible, try to post your photos as they happen.

But be careful here. You don't want to overwhelm followers with fifteen pictures of the sunset. Instead, pick one great photo of the sunset and post that. Then when you're having dinner at a lively local bar, post a selfie and share it on Instagram.

Post 3-4 pictures a day, but make sure you space them out, hours apart. This works best because you'll have followers in various time zones and if you only post in the mornings, then some of your followers will miss your posts.

Keep in mind that there are many different types of audiences that the travel niche appeals to. You want to consider your audience as you post pictures. For example, if you want to brand yourself as a travel blogger who travels with three kids, then post pictures of family friendly destinations or kid-centric restaurants.

Just don't make the mistake of choosing an audience without a disposable income. Sure, you can grow a following on Instagram of college students that are broke and eager to travel.

But a broke audience means you'll have a tough time selling them travel packages, tickets to tourist destinations or travel related products. Since your goal with Instagram marketing is to grow a following and earn money, you want to pick an audience that wants to travel and can afford to as well.

When it comes to travel photos on Instagram, keep in mind that you're selling so much more than the destination you're at. You're selling your audience an experience. There are hundreds of followers on Instagram that are looking through your photos and wishing that they, too could experience the freedom and exhilaration that comes from being able to pack and get on a plane right now.

So, what kinds of photos should you post? The most popular travel photos on Instagram are sunsets, beaches, and waterfalls. There's something about the natural beauty of a place that calls to followers.

Other popular photos on Instagram are architecture, famous landmarks, and animals in their natural habitats. When you post these photos, make sure you include a little bit about them - because your followers will want to know more.

If you share a picture of The Louvre, include a fun fact about it that isn't well known. Another way to share your adventures is to post pictures about the meals you eat. Every country has a different type of cuisine.

If you're in Spain, take a selfie with your Torta de gazpacho or meat stew before you dig in. You don't have to share a picture of everything you eat, but do share a few photos, so that your followers know what to expect in other countries.

As you build followers on Instagram, you can reward them with coupons, discount offers and deals specifically for them. The key is to let them live vicariously through you, and get ideas for use in their own lives!