

Grow Your Captive Audience with

INSTAGRAM



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Grow Your Captive Audience With Instagram

Did you know that Instagram has more than 300 million daily users and amazing user engagement levels? In fact, according to Buffer App, <https://blog.bufferapp.com/Instagram-marketing>, there are more than 95 million photos and videos shared every day. While that may seem like a lot of competition, there’s also a lot of opportunity. Your audience doesn’t just share one photo a day or engage with one instagrammer.

They engage with the ones that capture their attention. And the instagrammers that capture their attention day after day build their audience. So, the question is, how can you grab attention on Instagram and hold attention so that your end result is a large and captive audience? That’s what we’re going to take a look at in this report.

The Five Fundamentals

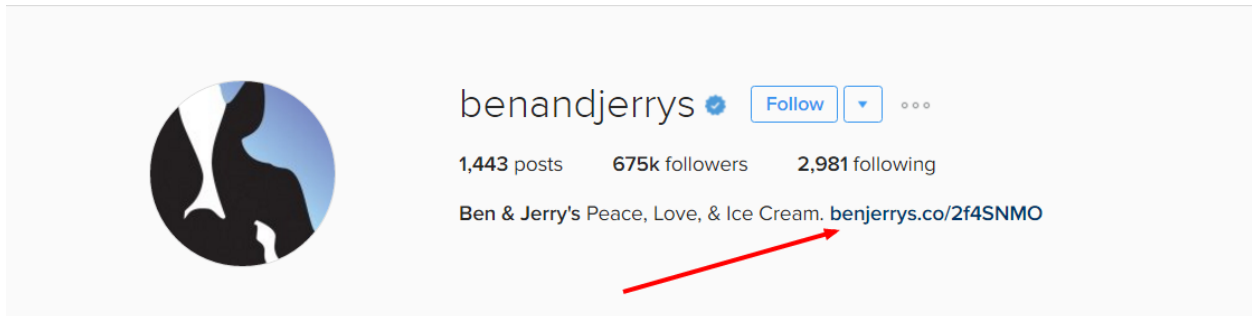
On Instagram, there are five fundamentals of any successful audience building strategy. We’re not going to go too much into a discussion about why Instagram works to build an audience. It’s highly effective and when you embrace these five fundamentals, it’s a powerful channel to add to your marketing strategy.

Fundamental #1 Goals and a Mission

What do you want to achieve via Instagram? This may sound silly, you want to grow a captive audience, right? But it has to go beyond that. What do you want to do with that captive audience?

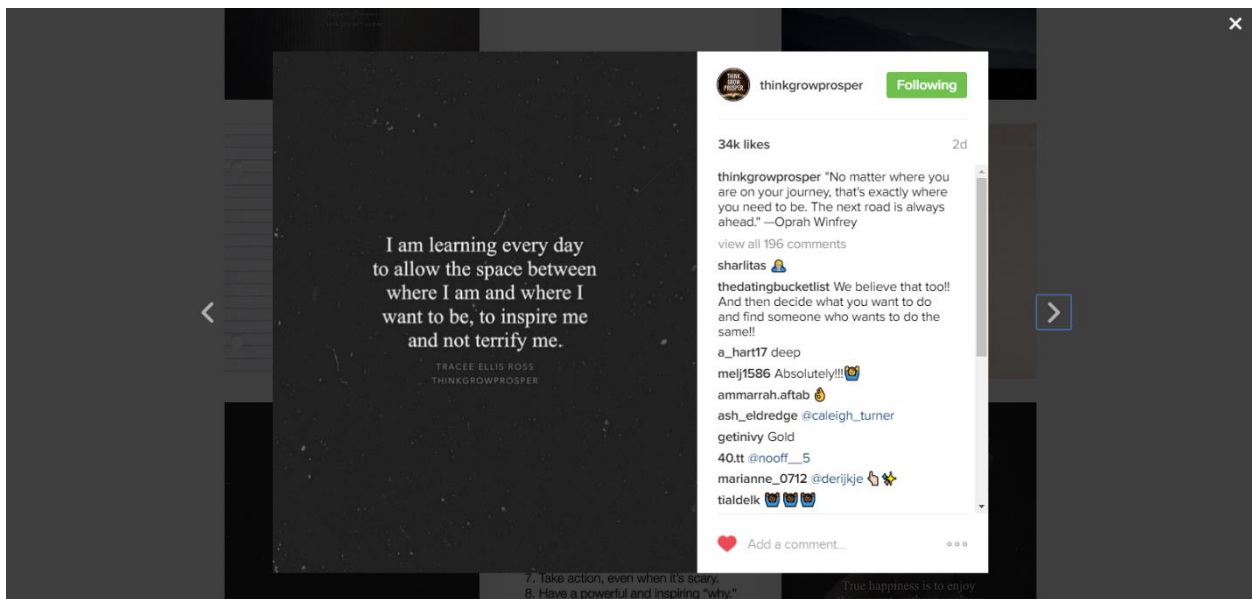
For example, are you growing an audience on Instagram to drive traffic to your sales page? If so, your content strategy might entail a large number of product photos.

Ben & Jerry's Ice cream, for example, includes a link on their Instagram page that takes visitors to their website - often to their "what's new" page where they promote new flavors. The goal is ultimately to motivate purchases.



If your goal is to build your list, then your content strategy on Instagram might entail sharing quotes, inspirational messages, and tips with a link to your email sign up page.

The website ThinkGrowProsper.com leverages Instagram to grow their email list. They post inspirational quotes and invite viewers to visit their website. At the website, in the header, visitors see a sign up offer for a free mindset course. The goal and mission for ThinkGrowProsper is to attract people who are interested in learning more and ultimately growing their email list.



The blog, CoolMomPicks.com earns income for affiliate sales and income from advertising. Their Instagram goal is to drive you to their blog so you click on links and make purchases. If you look at their Instagram page, <https://www.instagram.com/coolmompicks/>, you'll see an abundance of photos that are related to holidays, back to school, and other trending parenting topics. Posts often invite viewers to visit their website.

Common goals include but aren't limited to:

- Showcasing your products or services
- Building your community
- Increase awareness of your brand or strengthening your brand
- Building your email list
- Driving traffic to your site - to earn affiliate commissions or to build your blog following and earn income from advertising

So, while your goal is to grow a large audience on Instagram, you also want to know what you're going to do with that audience. It helps you achieve the remaining fundamentals.

Fundamental #2 Content strategy

Once you have a solid mission and goal for your Instagram activities, you'll then have an idea about how to achieve it. This is your strategy. What type of content do you need to share to achieve your goal? Take a look at CoolMomPicks on Instagram and contrast that with those of ThinkGrowProsper, <https://www.instagram.com/thinkgrowprosper/>.

You'll notice a definite difference in content. CoolMomPicks is highly visual and relates to the season, holiday, or often the subjects they're talking about on their blog. The content posted at ThinkGrowProsper singularly focuses on offering followers a motivational or inspirational quote of the day. ThinkGrowProsper has 2.3 million followers. Yes...million. And their content is quite simple.

CoolMomPicks has 16 thousand, they also have coolmomtech and coolmomeats as they grow their audience and following. Their content strategy is a bit more diverse.

What message do you want to communicate with your audience and what type of content supports you to achieve that? Consider:

- Quotes
- Product photos
- Tips
- Facts
- Photos of happy customers (with or without testimonials in the description)
- Pictures of yourself (if you are your brand and are using Instagram to strengthen your brand this could be a terrific idea. Check out Joel Comm on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/joelcomm/>.)
- Videos. If you head to Ben & Jerry's on Instagram, you'll see that many of their posts are videos...of ice cream. Fun!

Think about it from your audience's perspective...what do they want to see? What would they appreciate? What would they share?

For example, if your goal is to build your community, you might share a number of images of your customers, your associates, and others who are involved in your business. Create a sense of community by visually connecting your company to others.

Okay, now we need to look at one of the most challenging aspects of content, and that is consistency.

Fundamental #3 Consistency

No social channel is going to work well for you unless you have some degree of consistency. With 95 million posts shared every day, there are a lot of images competing for your audience's attention. If you don't have a consistent presence, they'll forget about you.

SO what does consistency mean?

In most cases, consistent content means that you post something on Instagram daily. Many marketers post several times a day and some post every other day. You'll need to find your balance. However, it is critical that you post often.

You can approach this however it fits into your goals and your available time and finances. For example, if you need professional photos of your products and you have a tight budget, you either hire a photography student who can take 30 photos for you each month or you post one professional photo a week and fill in the other days with different content.

Like other types of content, don't get bogged down with consistency at the expense or relevancy or quality. Yes, it is important to make sure that you post something on Instagram often, however if the daily posts are blurry, dark, or completely irrelevant to your audience, then you're doing more harm to your campaign than good. Find a consistent schedule that you can stick to. Later, as you grow, you can incorporate more posts into your schedule.

Let's talk about schedules quickly before we talk about quality and relevancy...

There are a few tools that you can use to schedule your Instagram posts in advance. They include, but aren't limited to:

- Schedugram - <http://schedugr.am/>
- Hootsuite - <https://hootsuite.com/Instagram>
- OnlyPult - <https://onlypult.com/>
- Later - <https://later.com/>

Leverage a tool like this so that you can stay ahead of your content, plan and strategize, and adapt as your audience grows and changes. Many of those tools also contain analytics to help you better understand the type of content your audience is connecting with.

Fundamental #4 Quality & Relevancy

We just mentioned quality. Your images need to represent your brand and your company. That means that if you're taking photos at an event and sharing them on Instagram, share the ones that are clear, not the dark or blurry ones. It also means that while you don't have to be a professional photographer, you want your products and images to look good. They have to be appealing to your viewer.

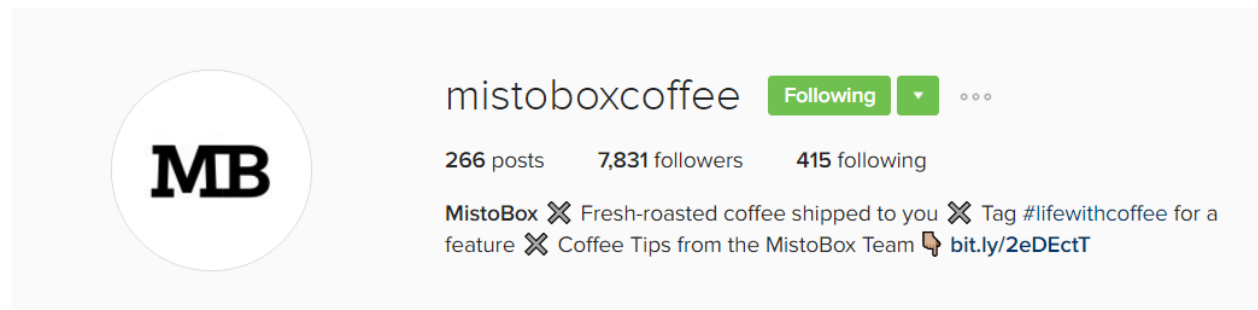
They also have to be relevant to your audience. Make sure that your audience is engaging with your content. Leverage those analytics. Pay attention to the images that get the most engagement and the images that increase followers, drive people to your website, or sell products.

Take a look at Mistoboxcoffee <https://www.instagram.com/mistoboxcoffee/>. They are a monthly coffee delivery membership. Join and you receive a bag of fresh coffee beans from a number of roasters around the country. The monthly choice is hand-picked for you by their barista based on your preferences. It's a bit like Stitchfix for coffee lovers. Their Instagram is beautiful. Simple pictures of coffee and they share an image every day. They have consistency, quality, and relevancy locked up.

Fundamental #5 Your Instagram Profile matters

Your account with Instagram comes with a profile, right? It's where you put your logo or picture, your website address or a link to your blog, email sign up form, or sales page. You can add a bit about your company, and a call to action.

You can also include hashtags and invite followers to use that hashtag to be added to your Instagram feed. For example,



Notice that Mistobox coffee includes a link to their blog, a logo, and a quick tagline, "fresh-roasted coffee shipped to you."

Here are a few more examples of what a profile can be.



CooMomPicks uses a picture of the two owners. Their names and faces are at the forefront of their brand and business, so this is a good move. Additionally, they have a blog post link for viewers to visit. Remember that they make money through affiliate sales and advertising sales, so blog traffic is a key goal.



As you can see, there are a variety of different image choices with the examples. Some use a logo. Others use their face. It depends largely on your business and how you brand yourself.

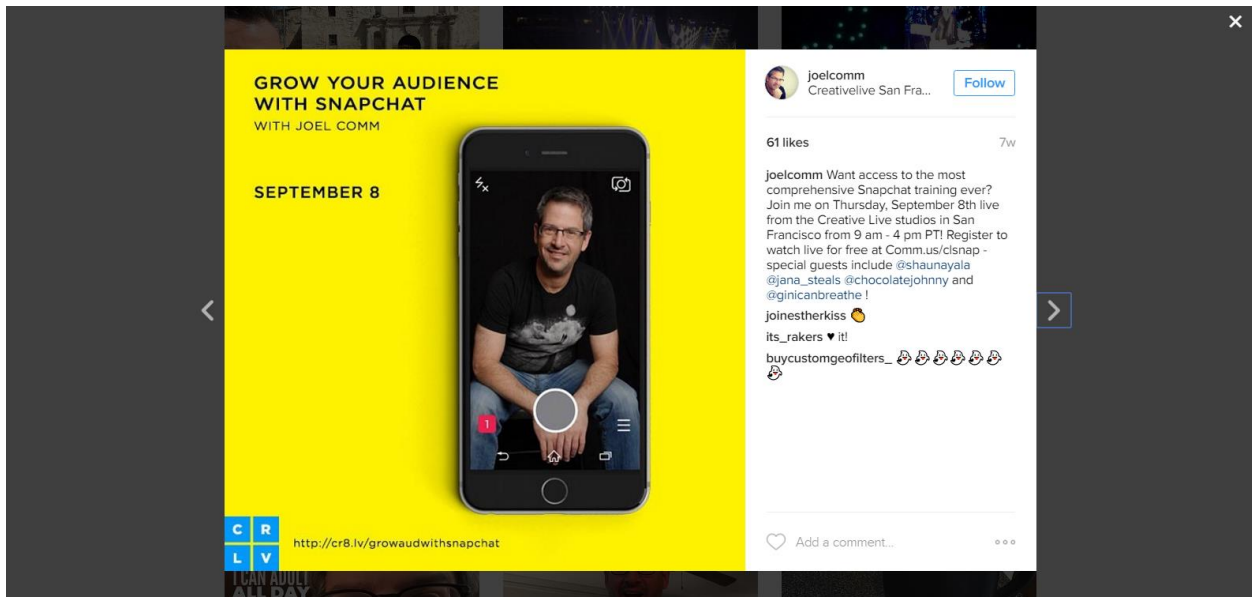
Every example includes a link in their bio. Unlike other social channels, you cannot add a link to a post. What you can do is invite viewers to visit your profile page and click on the link there. It's the only place where you can include a clickable link – take advantage of it.

Finally, spend some time crafting a quick and dirty description of who you are and what you do. It needs to be relevant to your audience, attention grabbing, and a good representation of who you are and what you're about.

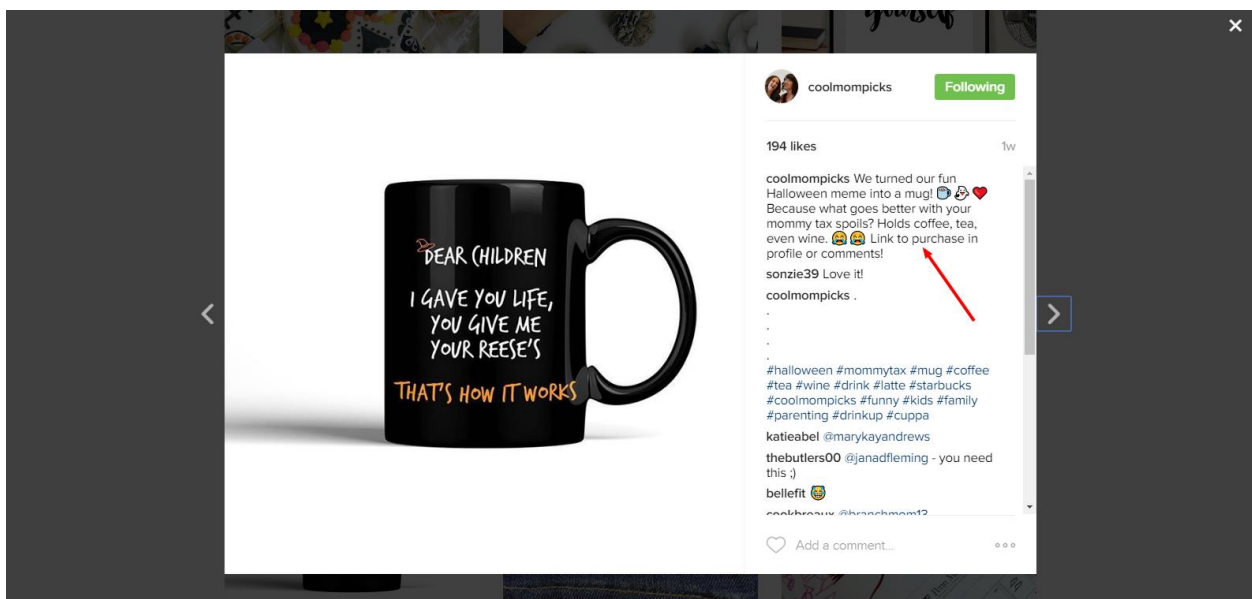
Your profile is a key opportunity to gain followers. It motivates people to become a part of your Instagram community and perhaps to take the next step with your business. However, your posts have to engage them enough that they take a look at your profile. SO let's wrap it up by talking about your image descriptions and how to leverage them to achieve your goals.

It's all in the description...

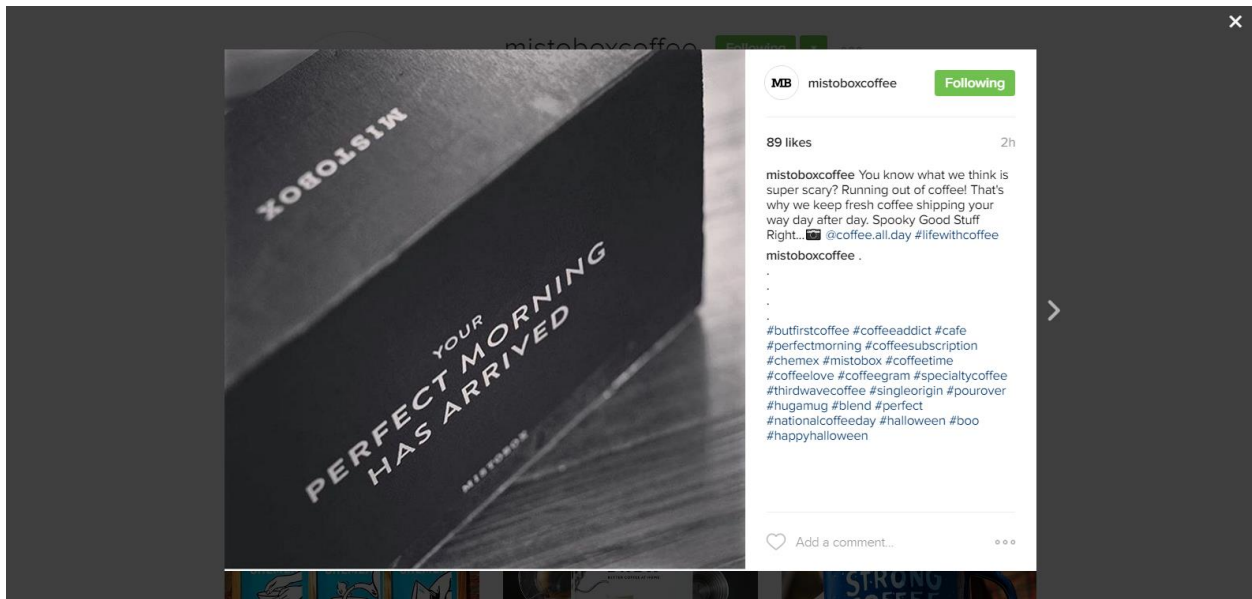
Instagram is a visual content channel, right? People share images and videos and that's it. However, each image also comes with an opportunity to share a description. If you look at the right-hand side of a post, you'll see that some instagrammers also share a bit of written content.



In the above image, Joel Comm is promoting his upcoming seminar. It includes a link (not a clickable one) that viewers can type into their browser, to register. Joel doesn't promote his business often, but when he does, he is transparent and leverages the image description area to tell viewers what he is offering.



Contrast the Joel Comm post with the CoolMomPicks post. They invite viewers to visit their profile page to click on the link and buy. They leverage their description area to drive traffic to their sales page. Notice all the hashtags, too? That helps Instagrammers find their posts. Don't forget to include a few relevant tags in your descriptions.



Finally, here's a post from MistoBoxCoffee. It is a simple conversational message that strives to connect with coffee lovers who may appreciate their service. And again, look at all of those hashtags!

Conclusion

Following the five fundamentals will get you where you want to be with Instagram marketing. You can build a large, active, and loyal audience with this popular and growing tool. Start with your goals and mission. What do you want to achieve? From there, study your audience, decide on a posting schedule, and start planning your content. Leverage the tools that Instagram provides including hashtags, your description space, and your profile, and don't forget to use that clickable link on your profile. It helps your followers make the connection to your blog or website and take those next steps.