



## Instagram

### Help guide

## Part One

As part of our latest blog posts we are introducing you to each social media platform, and going right back to basics to help you understand how you can use each one for your business, and which ones could be right for you.

Following on from Twitter, we are now looking at Instagram. A lot of people we meet are using Instagram from a personal point of view, or just as a camera tool, but it could be so much more than that, and depending on your business, could direct an enormous volume of customers your way. So, here we talk you through it from the beginning.

## What is Instagram?

Instagram is a photo sharing site where beautiful images are shared with the user's followers. The image is set as a square shape, and filters can be added to alter the image and transform the mobile phone shots into something stunning.



Instagram was launched in October 2010 and has taken the world by storm! As of December 2014 it was announced that Instagram had 300 million users each month, with 8000 users liking a photo every second, and 5000 comments made per second. More than 5 million photos are posted per day with a lot of them using hashtags to link to a bigger conversation (as we discussed in our Twitter introduction.)

Instagram is owned by Facebook, after they acquired it in April 2012 for approximately \$1 billion. In 2013, Instagram grew by 23%, in comparison to Facebook which grew by just 3%. As of June 2013 you have also been able to upload short videos (15 seconds maximum.)

## Why should I use Instagram?

Instagram is a brilliant visual tool to create strong awareness and aesthetic for your business and your brand. By giving an insight into your world around you, your followers and customers will identify with you and feel connected to you, and in turn, buy from you. You can promote your products on Instagram, but like Twitter, don't rely on it purely as a sales tool.

As Instagram is used mostly on mobiles and tablets the accessibility is phenomenal, and the possibility of reaching out to a wider market is huge. Make your images clear and attractive, with a good filter and you will gain likes and comments, which can then filter into customer loyalty and sales.

## Why do we love Instagram?

Instagram is a wonderful image sharing tool which not only gives you access to millions of visual delights, but can also connect you with other like minded individuals and raise your brand identity. By adding hashtags to your images you can bring potential customers into your world. Also, by searching keywords you can discover what else people are doing and talking about in your sector. Oh, and you can get lost in the beauty of all the photos! It really is offering a great human element to your business, and that is what Social Media is all about.



### How do I use it?

By now, you should have got the hang of Twitter from our blog posts, and Instagram works very similar. @ mentions, # hashtags and follows all work in the same way as on Twitter.

Along the bottom of your Instagram you can see the following widgets.

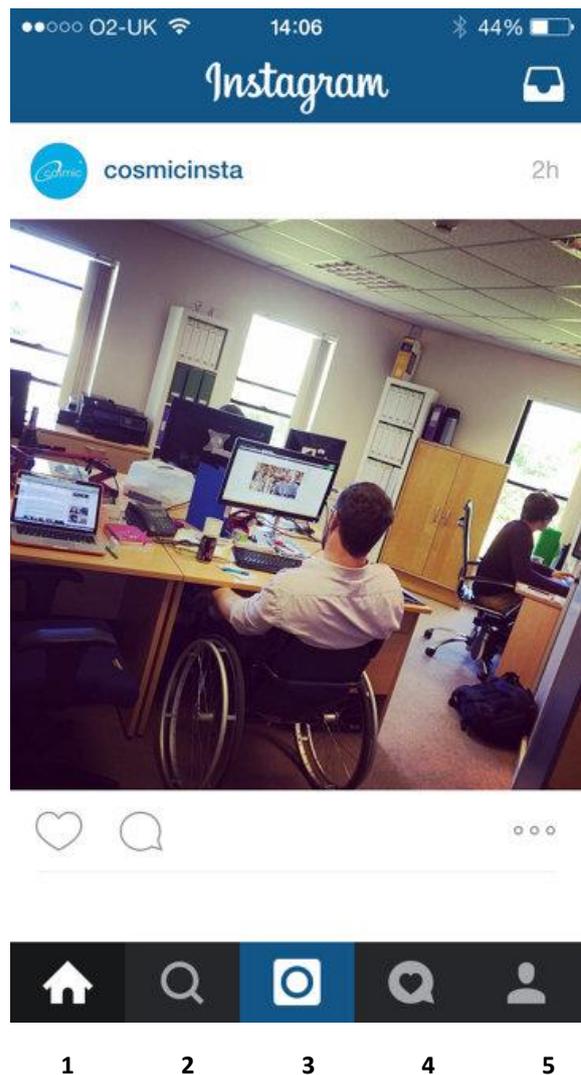
1. Home tab – This is where you view your newsfeed. All the images posted by the people you follow will be here. From there you can like (by clicking on the ‘heart’ underneath the image) or comment (by clicking on the speech bubble underneath the image).

2. Explore tab – This is where you can search for users (@) or hashtags (#). Instagram also suggests followers or trends that you may want to follow.

3. Camera tab – Clicking on this allows you to take an image to then upload to Instagram. You can also import an image you already have on your device from here too.

4. Activity tab – This is activity that has been happening from people you are following – images they have liked, or photos they have commented on. This can give you more ideas of people to follow. On the right hand side of the activity page you can see your notifications - who has followed you, liked a post or tagged you in a conversation (@).

5. Profile tab – By clicking on this icon you see your Instagram profile. This is how others see you. You can see your bio and the photos you have uploaded.





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## Part Two

Last time we introduced you to the beauty of Instagram and this week we will talk through the signing up process. You will then be able to take and share images with your followers and customers!

## Signing up

Creating your account with Instagram is free and very straightforward. You need to download the Instagram app on your mobile or tablet (you are unable to create an account on a computer) and then will be talked through setting up.



Just like Twitter, choose a username, a good profile picture and write a short bio. This should all be consistent with your branding, and presence on other social media sites. It makes sense to use your logo as a profile picture and (if you can) your business name as your username.

You can edit your details at any time, so don't worry if you change your mind later on down the line. Like with your other social media channels, you may want to make seasonal changes, or add any accomplishments in your bio.

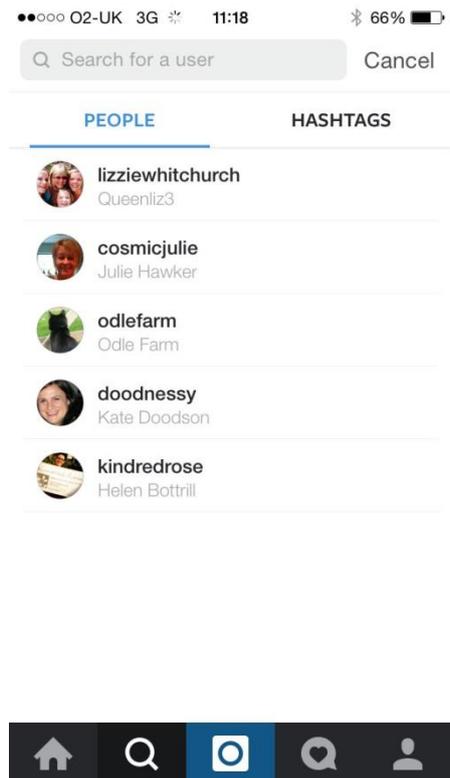
When writing your bio, remember you only have 150 characters to describe yourself. This is slightly less than Twitter, but remember to make it punchy and clear about who you are, and what you do. You want people to see

that bio and think you are the kind of business or person they want to follow.

You can also put a link to your blog or website within your bio. This is the only place you can use a link, as you can't do that in comments or captions. Make sure the link takes the customer to exactly where they need to be – usually the home page of your website or your blog.

Once you have filled in all your information you can link your Instagram page with your other social media channels. In the right hand corner of your home page choose 'share settings'. You have the option of sharing to Facebook (either your personal or your business page), Twitter, Flickr, Tumblr and Foursquare. This enables you to share your Instagram posts on any of those channels, but be careful not to inundate them with your imagery – especially a business page. And think about what images you do want to have on your Facebook and Twitter pages. You can decide each time whether to share the image or not.

Instagram will give you recommendations on who to follow – this could be accounts that Instagram thinks you will like, or friends and colleagues from your other channels. You can ask who of your followers are on Instagram and encourage them to follow you on there too!



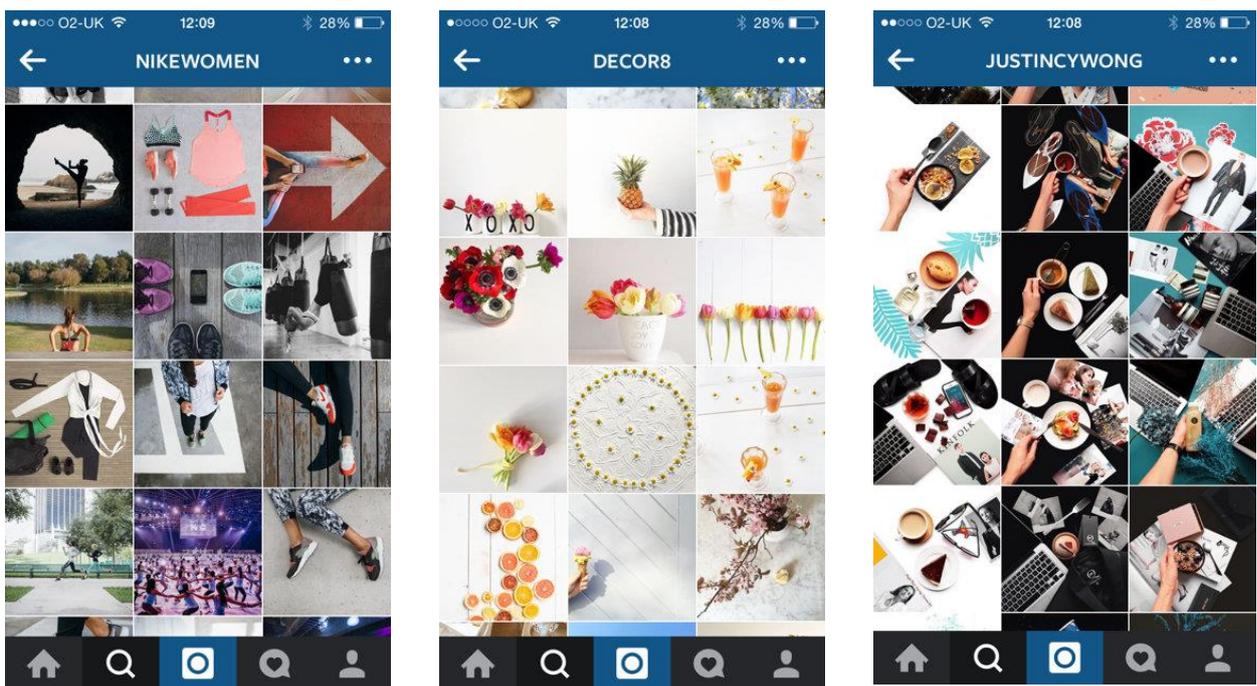
## Uploading photos

You are ready to start snapping! It may be an idea to take a few photos and get used to the filters available before posting any – you want to have a consistent style of images to give an insight into you and your business. Followers are interested in seeing quality images rather than just snaps of your day, so if you can, try to make them interesting. Tens of millions of people visit Instagram every day and visit to be inspired – so give them that inspiration!

*Ideas of what kind of pictures to post:*

- Work in progress
- Behind the scenes
- Staff members
- 'Out and about' photos
- Pets – everyone loves #dogsofinstagram
- Interiors

Make sure your images are in focus, clear and uncluttered. You can see below some great examples where Instagram works very well.



For more information Instagram has a great 'getting started' page which gives you some great tips, including how to post strategically for your business.

<https://business.instagram.com/gettingstarted/>



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## Part Three

Over the last two blogs we have talked you through Instagram and helped you sign up and start taking beautiful photographs! Now, you need to start finding followers and build up your engagement. But how do you do this?

## Getting followers

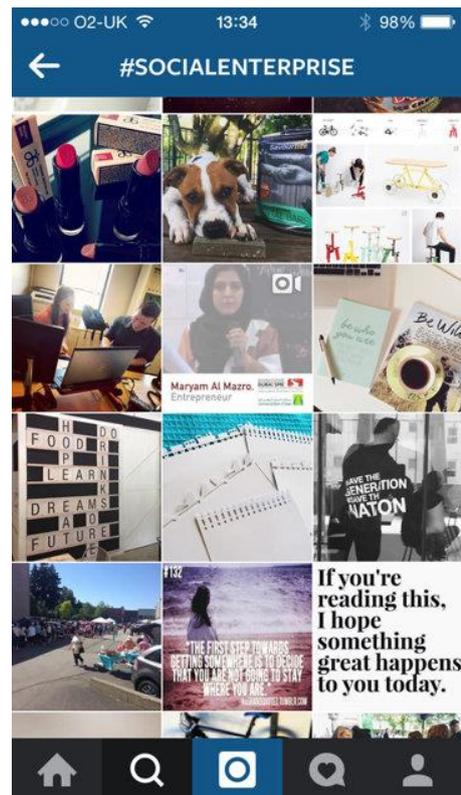
Like Twitter, followers will search for subject matter that they are interested in. That is why tagging photos is essential. It is not enough to post an image (however striking) without using text and hashtags too.

### Why?

Use hashtags to reach those people who are searching for subjects related to your brand. Or to support campaigns, contests, or to classify the image you are posting. But like we have mentioned before, hashtags should always be used in moderation and when relevant.

You can also tag other accounts in your posts, which helps bring interaction to a wider audience, as the tagged account gets a notification that you have mentioned them in a post, whereas with hashtags you don't get a notification. Again, only use this option if it is relevant to your post, for example, a client you are working with, or a building/city you have visited.

Another option is to add a specific location when posting which will then add your photo to your photo map. This is useful if you are at an event or show, for





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example. Your photo map can be accessed from your Instagram profile and gives your followers another way of exploring the images you have shared. When anyone views that location in the future (from other posts) they can also see your image as well as any others who have been tagged in that location.

## Building awareness and getting engaged

Once you are signed up with Instagram, let your followers on your other social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter know, and encourage them to follow you with a link to your Instagram account.

Add the Instagram icon to your website, and communication such as emails, postcards and stationery. If you have an office or retail location, include it on signs in-house.

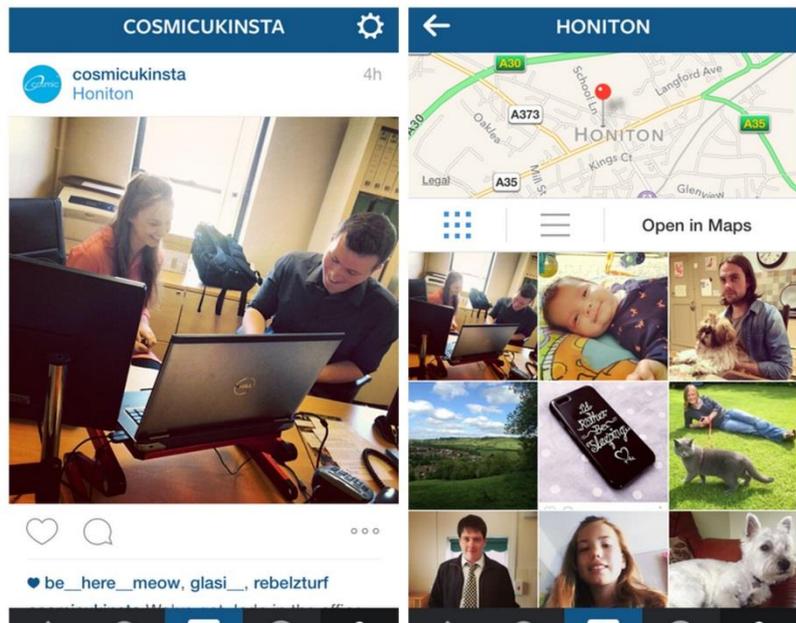
Run contests on your page encouraging people to post content that relates to your brand, using relevant hashtags or tagging your account.

Encourage people to tag you when attending your events, again with any relevant hashtag.

Ask people to submit photos or videos about a relevant subject and display them on your page.

Keep posting high quality, relevant content that people want to see in their feed. It is very easy to follow and unfollow accounts on Instagram and if they don't like what they see you could find yourself unfollowed!

Like all social media, keeping engaged with accounts is essential to your success on Instagram. Follow your brand's partners, clients, customers, advocates and influential members of your community whose content may relate to your brand.





Keep an eye on the Instagram blog by following their page. There are themes where you can submit your images using a hashtag which then can be used within their blog. On the home page of Instagram there is an 'explore' tab which includes images that contain strong, interesting content and if yours fit that, it could be included.

Try to post and interact at least once a day and you should see your followers increase – as long as you are posting well! Don't get too focused on those numbers though, Instagram is a fantastic marketing tool but it is also so much more, it is communication between you and your customers, clients and ambassadors and to build it you do need time and patience.

Good luck, and let us know who you are!!  
#cosmicukinsta