Eight Actionable Tips to Help You Grow Your Instagram Following Right Now

Instagram can be an amazing way for travel bloggers to to connect with fellow travellers (both bloggers and the everyday-run-of-the-mill-amazing-travellers) and strike up meaningful relationships with people you'd otherwise never cross paths with.

It's also a fantastic way to connect with brands and help influence the way people travel. If you've had an incredible experience, there's often no better way than to show it visually, but with a small following, how can you ensure your content gets out in front of the right people to actually make a difference?

We used these strategies to grow our Instagram account from a personal one (where I literally posted snaps of my cats and home renovation - exciting, right?) to a fairly successful travel blogging Insta account with almost 35,000 followers.

If we can do it, you can too!

Hook Your Existing Followers in with Engaging Captions and Questions

In your quest to build your following, don't underestimate the importance of engagement with the followers you currently have. It's all very well to have a high follower count but genuine engagement is just as important.

Try to craft interesting captions (you could share a related quote or fun fact) or pose a question to encourage your followers to respond. Alternatively, encourage them to double tap if the photo's taken somewhere they'd like to be or tag someone they'd love to be there with.

Engage, Engage, Engage

Though Instagram can be a great way to visually showcase your work, it is also a genuine community and to do well in it, equally genuine engagement goes a long way.

If somebody leaves you a comment or responds to a question, be sure to reply back to them. You've also now got the option to 'like' a comment which I particularly like for those emoji-only comments that don't necessarily justify a reply - there are only so many ways you can reply to a high five!

If you're struggling on engagement, jump onto a follower's feed and leave them some love - it's the best way to foster a 'real' relationship and you may even find they scratch your back too.

Gaining new followers is awesome but not at the expense of those that have always had your back.

Utilise Hashtags

If you're looking to extend your reach (and let's face it, that's why you're reading this post), hashtags can be a can a great way to do so. If you choose the right tags, you'll potentially get your image in front of people that otherwise wouldn't have seen it (and with a little luck, they'll totally dig it!)

Each post is able to include up to 30 hashtags in total between the caption and comments - try to use a combination of subject/location specific hashtags and some more generic ones that fit your overall niche.

Need some suggested hashtags? Check out our account to see the ones we love or leave a comment and we'll fire our faves through.

You can also use the 'FocalMark' app to find some top hashtags for your content.

Hook in the Right Followers

So you've engaged with the people already following you and have connected with some newbies through hashtags but your follower count isn't going anywhere?

Track down other 'grammers that have a similar feel to your account and check out their following. We focus on high-end adventure travel, for example, so when we find another account within the same niche, we take a look at the people following them.

Chances are, those people could be interested in what we have to offer too. Follow the people that have recently liked their photos (keeping in mind, you want active accounts to engage with) and you may find they're into your gallery too and decide to follow along.

Keep an Eye on your Progress

Knowledge is Power.

Followers Pro for Instagram gives us that in-depth knowledge of our followers, allowing us to make changes to our account as required.

We always try to follow and engage with people that support us and those that have similar interests. We love connecting with others that create engaging, beautiful content and those that inspire us with exciting adventures to new and exotic locations.

You'll never be everybody's cup of tea though and there's nothing wrong with that.

Should you follow someone and after a period of time, get the sense that they're just not that into you (maybe they never followed back?), you have the option to unfollow their account.

Whilst your account's small, this step isn't essential (and who knows, you may strike up a conversation with them on day that alerts them to your account and get them totally on board) but as you grow and approach the cap of the 7,500 accounts that you're able to follow, clearing out these accounts becomes an important process to allow you to connect with others that might feel your vibe a little more.

Try to remember, Instagram is a big community and people have busy lives. If someone doesn't follow you back (or even worse, unfollows you), try not to take it personally - they might have hit their cap or moved their aesthetic on.

If you find that happening, have a crack at engaging with their content (it can't hurt to remind them of you), unfollow them or keep them on your list of followers for inspiration. There's no right or wrong here - just go with whatever feels right.

Sometimes, Less is More

Think of Instagram as your photography highlight reel. I hate to break it to you but nobody wants to see five photos of you on the beach all in slightly different poses (even if it is a gorgeous beach!)

Posting photo after practically-identical photo is a sure-fire way lose followers.

Build a Cohesive Theme

Though you should avoid publishing too many similar photos, you do want to ensure your snaps have a degree of cohesion. When someone visits your gallery, it should be clear that the next 'gram belongs to your account too.

You might like to streamline your account by sticking to a similar colour theme (maybe the creamy, dreamy, washed-out filters that some Instagram users apply or the bright, high-contrast Lux effect that we tend to use) or have a similar pose that runs through your account.

Whatever you choose, try to ensure that each photo looks like it belongs in your account - bonus points, if your followers are able to recognise your pics right off the bat!

Don't let things get too predictable though.

I know, I know, this Instagram stuff is hard work...

"How can you stand out when you work so hard to fit in?"

After all is said and done though, don't be afraid to break a few rules.

Your account should reflect you as a person as well as your brand - authenticity and honesty can sometimes feel a bit rare in our polished-social-media world so don't hide yourself away out of fear.

We wanna see what you're all about!

Feel free to drop your account in the comments below - we'd be happy to pass some feedback along.

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