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Instagram tips, tricks and treats for the CRE professional - by Diana Podaski

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Instagram is one social network that continues to grow with now 700 million total active monthly users so it's a network you should pay equal enough attention to as Facebook (though the giant owns both companies). Here are some Instagram tips, tricks and treats to creating thumb-stopping content and growing your following.

Instagram etiquette – The first thing to know is you should not post more than twice a day on Instagram, especially on a business account. Nobody likes a deal hog or a stream hog.

Fonts and colors – The best way to build a brand presence is to have something stand out about your content vs. others so that when your photo or video pops up in a stream, it is consistent with the overall theme of your account. Do you have only black and white photos? Photos that always include text? A certain angle all your shots are taken? Something red in every shot or perhaps an antique filter? For fonts, it's recommended to only pick two and stick to them but if you are creating custom graphics, (especially for holidays) it's fun to change it up.

Types of posts – Taking it a step past fonts and colors, think about certain types of posts for your account. Some types include: Cinemagraphs (where only part of the photo is moving), boomerangs (a looped gif), hyperlapse (video sped up x12), your own custom graphics (infographics or employee announcements etc.), user generated content (posting someone else's photo with credits), and stories (videos showing an event as it unravels). Mixing all of these types of posts is ok too.

Be relevant – Be sure to humanize your brand/account by staying relevant and posting about social happenings (ex. your city sports team wins a playoff), news items (though try to stay away from politics), or even basic things like the changing of the leaves. Think about how you can relate the topic back to your business but don't oversell!

Get personal – Most photos and videos that do well on my accounts are ones with photos of people around major events. Smiles are contagious.

Don't over market – do not post property fact sheets, a pet peeve of mine. Fact sheets have a place and that is on a website or via email. If you want to market a property on Instagram use beautiful creative photography or video. Fact sheets aren't sized for Instagram and the text is too small to get any value from.

Tools to utilize – No one said this was easy...use tools to help you create content and plan your posting calendar appropriately. Planoly is great for seeing your content at a glance and can help you schedule posts, see analytics, and even make items shoppable. Try VSCO for photo editing or simply use the editor in Instagram for cropping and filters.

To Grow – Now that you have great content be sure to utilize the internal functions of Instagram to grow your account with hashtags and geotags. First, add a link or hashtag to your bio. When you post a photo or create a story be sure to tag people/companies/retailers/brands, etc... and click the location button to include the geotag. None of these tips, tricks or treats will benefit you if you don't like, comment and share other people's content so remember that social media only works if you engage.

Fun Fact: Based on the number of Google searches so far this year, Wonder Woman is the most popular costume this Halloween (Source: TIME Magazine).

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