

# INSTAGRAM STORIES



## How to Create a Killer Fitness, Lifestyle or Travel Brand With Instagram and Instagram Stories

Did you know that Instagram is actually the second largest social network in terms of users? Did you know that it has some of the very best engagement out of any platform too?

That may surprise you seeing as many people aren't aware of just how big Instagram really is. That quickly becomes apparent though, when you look at some of the massive celebrities that owe their entire careers to Instagram. These are people who have become highly successful and found very lucrative sponsorship deals, simply by posting photos of themselves working out, wearing nice clothes or travelling the world.

They're doing what they love, taking photos of it... and then getting paid huge amounts for their troubles!

That should tell you something about how powerful Instagram is and hopefully get you excited for the possibilities. Not only could *you* become one of those wealthy people but you could also leverage the platform to promote an existing business too. Many big companies are using Instagram to make a massive splash and are seeing massive increases in their profits as a result.

In this guide, you'll learn how to use Instagram to create a highly successful fitness brand and we'll see how you can apply the same principles to create a highly successful brand in just about any other niche, or to product an existing business interest that you may have.

We'll also see how you can leverage the very newest features on Instagram – Instagram stories and Instagram live video – in order to make an even *bigger* impact than ever before.

Get ready, because we're about to change your entire perspective on the nature of internet marketing...



## How to Win at Instagram: Sell the Dream

Before we get started with the practical advice, we need to focus on some theory. We need to see what makes a successful Instagram account tick and how this same principle can be applied to any kind of business. And underpinning practically every successful Instagram account is just one key principle: selling the dream.

So what precisely does that mean? Well, essentially it means that you're going to find your value proposition. You're going to find the 'thing that your business does for people' and how you are making lives better and then you're going to focus on that in a very emotive and compelling way.

A value proposition essentially means 'the thing that your business offers beyond the physical sum of your products' parts'.

For example then, you might sell clothes. If you sell clothes, then the physical sum of what you're selling is the fabric, the design work and the sewing. This is what gives you your *price*.

But that's not where the *value* lies. The value lies in what you're claiming your product can do for people: how your product can make lives better. On the one hand, clothes make life better by keeping people warm. Hence the old adage: you don't sell hats, you sell warm heads!

But more importantly, clothes have a big impact on how we feel about ourselves and on how others see us. And *this* is where the real value proposition lies. This is what enables you to offer value to others. In other words, your clothes can make people feel more confident, look more attractive, make more money, have more luck with the opposite sex... maybe even get a pay rise. You want people to feel amazing and for that confidence and that boost in appearance to help them get whatever they want from life.

And that is the 'dream' that you need to sell on Instagram.

So going back to the example we're working with here: the fitness brand. What is the 'dream' in this case?

Simple: if you have a fitness brand, then your dream is to be healthy, to look amazing, to be physically intimidating and to have more luck in relationships.

People who are physically very fit will look and feel amazing. They will wake up first thing in the morning with tons of energy. They will put on clothes and look excellent in them. They will draw positive attention from the opposite sex. They will perform better in their careers by virtue of looking more attractive: all these things are going to help them to get what they want in life and to feel great doing it.

And when you learn how to sell that on Instagram, you can build a *massive* loyal following and *sell* pretty much anything...



## How to Sell the Dream on Instagram

So how do you sell that dream on Instagram? And why is Instagram a platform that allows you to do this better than nearly other platform?

Partly, it is the visual nature. You know what they say: a picture can tell a thousand words. You can tell your audience that they should be fitter and healthier but that will pale in comparison to the emotional impact you'd get from *showing them* that healthy and fit lifestyle!

Likewise, Instagram will lend itself naturally because Instagram is all about making the everyday and the mundane look desirable and artistic.

That's what the 'filters' that you get from Instagram are all about. When you apply a filter to a photo, you are making it a little 'hyper real' and thereby increasing the emotional content. You are taking what you do and you are making it look that much more idealized. That is how you sell the dream, that is how you get an emotional response and that is how you build a following.

So if you have a fitness brand, what you need to do is to paint the lifestyle that you are selling. That means uploading photos of people running on beaches topless with beautiful sunsets behind them. These people have got incredible abs, bronze skin and maybe they're running next to a stunning man or woman, laughing.

The same channel might show a guy in a suit but bursting out of it thanks to his bulging biceps, with incredible determination.

It might show a woman doing yoga in front of a sunrise while drinking a smoothie.

It might show a photo of someone training hard in the gym and looking incredible doing it.

To someone who wants to be fitter and healthier, to someone who wants to feel better about themselves, you are painting their ideal future. Your objective is not to make them feel inadequate about

themselves: your objective is to make them feel inspired and to help them to dream about that perfect future.

Therefore, they will be moved to do what they can to get there and hopefully they will follow your advice to get there. When your advice becomes 'buy this product', they will be motivated by those powerful emotions to do just that. You have aligned their goals and dreams with your product and brand and in doing so, you have made it incredibly desirable.



## How to Tell a Thousand Words

So what does this look like in practice?

A good place to start is by identifying your brand and your mission statement. Make sure that you know precisely what your brand is and what it is that you hope to achieve through your product. Don't just be about the money: have something more than that that you want to do for people. Have a purpose and a goal, so that your followers can feel almost as though they are joining a movement when they hit that 'follow' button.

Create a brand that people can feel *excited* about.

Once you've done that, you can identify the kinds of pictures and videos you need to start uploading. This will allow you to make sure that you remain on-brand at all times and on-message. Consistency is highly important here, as if you are constantly posting about different subjects, then you will find that your followers become frustrated and unsubscribe.

If someone follows a fitness brand on Instagram, they do so because they are interested in fitness and they want to see more of that type of content. They do *not* do it because they want to see photos of your dog.

Stay on-message then and post every single day *at least*. To help you do this, something you can do is to take a bunch of photos in a few days and then keep them in a folder to fall back on on the days when you don't have much that you can use. Spend a day with a high quality photo and build up a selection of photos that way.

As for the type of that you take, you need to make these look as professional and as well composed as possible. Professional photos will help you to build authority and trust in your niche and will make you feel like a legitimate outfit, rather than some hobbyist taking photos in their spare time.

Meanwhile, you need to know how to frame and compose your shots in order to get the maximum emotional benefit...

## **Hardware**

The first way to increase the quality of the photos that you are taking is to get a high quality camera. A great camera will be one that has a good sensor, a high quality lens and lots of options allowing you to control things like the shutter speed. Usually, this is going to mean either a DSLR camera, or a bridge camera.

Using this and then uploading your photos via a USB will result in much higher production values than simply relying on your phone – and especially if you also invest in some good lighting. Getting a lightbox can help a great deal as that way you're not always going to be relying on it being sunny weather outside in order to take your photos.

Having a good camera phone is a good idea too though, as many of the photos you take will probably be spur of the moment and things that you snap while out and about – especially if you have a personal brand and if you live the lifestyle you preach. Take your camera to the gym and get the occasional photo so that people can feel like they're a part of your workouts!

## **Some Tips for Taking Great Photos**

Perhaps more important than the equipment is the wetware – the person *behind* the camera. You need to know how to tell a story and how to make it into something that inspires people.

So what does it mean to tell a story? It means that your photo needs to communicate more than is in the frame.

Think about that shot of someone doing sit ups on the beach in the evening. What does that tell you about this person and about their lifestyle?

Sure, it says that they have great abs and they look good too. But it also tells you that they live somewhere beautiful and that they have the free time to actually enjoy that area of natural beauty. It also tells you that they have plenty of energy – enough energy to be working out at this time. And it tells you that they're dedicated.

All these things are desirable and especially if they're tanned, good looking and wearing great clothes too!



Running on the beach against a sunset says the same thing. But so too does a photo of footprints in the sand, or perhaps a pair of running shoes with headphones draped over them and a silhouette doing yoga in the background.

The more of a story you can tell in your photo, the more successful it will be: this way your photo is once again more than the sum of its parts and that is naturally engaging because people are going to want to know what the story is all about and they're going to want to try and piece it together.

It's also important that you design your photo so that nothing will shatter the image that you're trying to create.

For example, if you want to make an image of someone who is healthy and happy and who loves going on runs in the sun, then you need to ensure that you avoid cloudy, rainy skies that will ruin that impression. You need to make sure that the person in that photo is well groomed. And you need to ensure that they don't have any stains on them.

I learned how important these small details are working for a tech firm. I was being taught to collect 'b-roll' of gadgets that we were reviewing and they pointed out to me how having the phone look dusty in the photo would completely ruin the professionalism of the video. Likewise, if the phone was left on a park bench, then it was very important that the bench shouldn't have any ugly marks on it. A big lump of bird poo would massively impact on the vibe of 'desirable tech' that the brand was aiming for!

Of course you also need to make the photo as dynamic and as engaging naturally as it can be. That comes down partly to the quality of the camera but also to your own ability to frame the shot. Think about your foreground, middle ground and background. Ideally, you want something interesting in each layer as this will give your photo depth, meaning it will look more three dimensional. Try to find elements like paths or rivers that can lead the eye from the foreground *into* the background.

Another thing to consider is scale. Can you make something look bigger or smaller by its proximity to other items? Can you make something more exciting in that same way?

You should also always pay attention to where the light source is in relation to the subject. The best scenario is to have most objects lit from the side in portrait. This will create more dynamic and interesting shadows and is what is known as 'Rembrandt lighting'.

Don't forget that you can cheat to make your photos look more beautiful and desirable by applying effects and filters. Just turn up the brightness a little, or if you want to go for a grungy gym aesthetic... turn it down!



## Using Instagram Stories and Live Video

The latest addition to Instagram's roster of features is Instagram Stories, which brings with it Live Video. Stories allow you to create photos that will only last for a short amount of time (24 hours) before self-destructing. They appear at the top of a follower's homefeed and thus have particularly good engagement.

Live video meanwhile is broadcast live, giving you the opportunity to respond in real-time to comments being left on your videos and to actually directly interact with your followers. Both these tools provide you with a way to interact more directly with your fans and to give them a sense of knowing you a little better.

This works *particularly* well for personal brands. These are brands that rest on your own individual personality and that give you a more personal relationship with your audience. But even for start-ups and small businesses, giving people an insight into your working day can be a very powerful thing. As can being able to review a product live and actually respond immediately to questions. This makes such a big impression on visitors and is a fantastic way to build trust and authority.

In both cases, these tools also allow you a little more freedom and leeway on the kind of content you create. When you post any picture to Instagram that will appear on your 'grid', you need to think about how this will look for people discovering your account for the first time. Every single picture *could* be someone's first impression of you and so you need to ensure that it fits your brand and your mission statement.

Conversely though, with the stories feature, you will be able to upload photos precisely for your existing fans, which can bring them along on trips, or which can even be intended as a joke. It won't impact on people checking you out for the first time but it will allow you to build

a closer relationship with your existing followers and let them feel as though they are getting privileged access to your brand, your story and your lifestyle.

Certain content works particularly well for live video and for stories, whereas other content will work better on your main feed. Then there are the 'boomerangs' which work like small, looping GIFs and which can be highly viral when used well.

All of these things can help you to further sell the image of someone who is in incredible shape and who looks amazing – and of someone who can help others to do the same.

The same principles will also apply whatever other niche your brand is and whether you are a blogger, a vlogger or a large corporation.

To learn all of the secrets of successful Instagram marketing, to see how to bring thousands of fresh views to your channel and to learn how to use advanced techniques to sell products; be sure to read the full ebook on 'Instagram Stories'.

There, we'll go over everything we've covered here in much more detail and we'll also take extra time examining the power and the importance of Instagram Stories. What's more, is that you'll learn how to use your brand in order to attract a high paying sponsor, or in order to sell products in huge numbers.

In short, you will learn how to use all of the latest features of Instagram to their fullest in order to drive huge sales and build a massive brand with thousands of highly loyal followers. To get started, check out that book today!

Otherwise, it's time to get started on growing your own channel. What's your story? How are you going to make your channel stand out from the crowd? And what is the 'dream' that you're going to sell through your photos and videos?