



There are **5 types of content** that will get you the maximum return on Instagram, and keep your followers engaged.

1. Photos

The backbone of Instagram. Even if you are keeping it real and posting everyday content, you in real life: real doesn't mean dark and blurry. "Real" moments still need to be clear, in focus and interesting enough to stand out. Your photos need to be enough to make your followers and potential followers stop and double tap, or even better...comment.

2. Boomerangs

Are fun and turn an OK photo into a fun one. They make everything look cool. People tend to engage more with them.

3. Slideshows

Instead of spamming your feed with lots of photos from an event or vacation or your day, you can upload multiple photos or videos (up to 10) at once into albums/slideshows that your followers can see. Perfect for tutorials, announcements, storytelling, and events.

4. Instagram Live

Instagram Lives will boost you up in the algorithm so they are so worth taking the time to try. BUT use it purposefully. Be useful, be entertaining. I basically watched a wedding one weekend. It was fabulous.

Which brings me to.....

Instagram Stories

Instagram stories is most used part of the Instagram app. There are 300 million DAILY users that use Instagram Stories.

Not only are they fun to make and addictive to watch, but they help you get seen more by your target audience! Instagram is a social app, they want you to share images and slices of your life.

Why are they important?

- Helps you to reach more followers that may not see you in their feed.
- Increases your chance at catching new followers because Instagram stories are now discoverable through hashtags and location tags.

- Instagram suggested stories are shown at the top of the explore page.

So how can you leverage Instagram stories for your brand?

1. What to post?

- First, before you post a story, think about WHO are you posting for? What part of your audience CARES about what you are about to post?
- If you are a food blogger, can you show yourself actually cooking the recipe? Shopping for it? Eating it? Someone else enjoying it? The empty pie plate?
- Example, check out the feed of @feedmedearly. She is an extreme case of doing it right but her videos pretty much also include some type of cooking or eating. It's a natural beautiful extension of her brand
- If you have a pretty curated feed, stories is a great way to show the person behind the brand.
- Show making that recipe that you posted on your feed.
- Show the actual trip behind those gorgeous photos for your vacation.
- Share your day in motherhood.

2. Don't just share "link in profile"

- You can do that on your Instagram feed. If you do that on your Instagram stories with every single post, why should they come over? Use the 80/20 rule: 80% is value and 20% promotion.
- Share your daily walk with your dog, then share a blogging topic, share yourself getting a coffee, then share a link to something you tried that day. Don't let everything lead back to your website. BE USEFUL, informative and fun all mixed into one.

3. Develop a routine

- Develop something unique to your brand, what about your feed are you known for?
- For me, almost every morning, I post a morning #coffeestories. If you look at my feed you know I love coffee and flowers. If you watch my Instagram stories this morning you also know I love coffee, flowers and you know my music taste. I have some people who come to see what song I play, I have some who come to see what flowers I have. I get tons of engagement from the stories.
- Look at the feed of @alisha_sommer, she does a morning story also, but hers also includes 10 things that she wrote about the day before. It's fascinating, you have to take the time to hold the screen to read them, but I love it.
- @fostermoms shows you the day in the life of two moms mothering three kids. @leefromamerica does meal-prep Sundays

- Find something that goes with your brand and make a series out of it. It doesn't have to be everyday, maybe just every Tuesday you do a tip. Maybe every Saturday you show your cleaning routine. Who knows. Find something that is on brand.

4. What/How often to post

- Post 3-5 “stories a day” a combo of photos, boomerangs, videos and lives. Spread them out over the day so that you always stay at the front of your followers feed.
- Be intentional, **THIS IS NOT SNAPCHAT**
- Post real life events/”real time” content
- **USE** hashtags. **USE** geotagging
- Decorate your stories. It's fun, it keeps your readers engaged
- If you're too busy or forgetful to post everyday (like me) you could still create more consistency in your posting schedule by hosting a weekly segment or series-- something that your followers can always look forward to or expect.
- You can also create content for stories in advance. This way you can post consistently, even when you don't have time to create something new.

HACKS:

Now, it's hard to CONSTANTLY share on Instagram stories

And if you know me, you know the way my life is set up, I don't have a lot of time.

So a few hacks I use.

1. Record the stories, videos photos during the day and post them later that same day.

Yes, the only thing that is usually in real time is my coffee stories, everything else is usually recorded, but actually shared later. BECAUSE POSTING STORIES WITH THE GRAPHICS AND EVERYTHING ALL AT THE SAME TIME IS A NO

2. PLAN:

Plan out your stories. If I know something is happening that day that you want to share, plan out a "storyboard " Decide what kind of things you want to share and plan to do so. Make it easy on yourself and have a shot list

3. If you take video and it's too long:

There is an app called Cut Story and another called Storeo. Both will slice long videos into 15 second Instagram stories for you. Download it.