



INSTAGRAM FOR MARKETING

Welcome to 'Instagram for Marketing', one of the training modules from Community Literacy of Ontario's Social Media Marketing project. This project is designed to develop resources to help Ontario's literacy agencies, and others, use social media for marketing.

[Click here](#) to access our resources.

Using Instagram for Marketing

Once you are familiar with [Instagram](#) as an application, and its best practices for organizational and personal use, it's time to delve deeper into its uses for your organization as a marketing tool. Instagram is widely used for marketing, storytelling, and engagement through mobile and web technologies. Instagram's potential as a marketing tool for organizational use is largely based on the mobile-friendly nature of the application and the highly engaged community Instagram boasts as a network. Although users may access their Instagram feed via the [web](#), the majority of the application's users carry their Instagram feed in their pockets or purses, using the mobile application only.

The mobile nature of Instagram provides your organization with the opportunity to get noticed on the go, while your audience is carrying your content around with them during their everyday routines! In one moment, a photo can evoke various opinions, emotions and calls to action.

What stories will your organization tell using Instagram, and how will it impact your communities and audiences?



Why Instagram?

The Instagram Community is Active

140 million of Instagram's 200 million users check their Instagram feeds daily, and 70 million are actively checking their feeds multiple times per day (KISSmetrics March, 2014). What does this mean for your organization's Instagram account?

It means that the majority of the Instagram community is seeking out content to consume. By actively posting meaningful content, users will be happy to engage with your organization! The 140 million daily active users are seeking out photos and videos to engage with during the spare few minutes they may have between their daily routines. Whether a user is looking to become inspired, educated or temporarily engaged in the content they are seeking out, Instagram provides your organization with a vast opportunity: the opportunity to get noticed, advocate for your mission, and turn audience members into allies for your cause.



The police department in Reykjavik, Iceland posted this picture on Instagram called "K9 wanna-be". It received over 12,000 likes!

The Instagram Aesthetic

Instagram's filters are widely celebrated among its community. Applying filters to photos was a trend started by Instagram a few short years ago, when the photo-sharing network was first launched, and it has been one of the reasons why Instagram has been extremely popular.

Photos that receive higher amounts of engagement usually have a filter applied to them, and fit the mold of the 'Instagram aesthetic'.

In your photo, pair well-lit and bright colours with the vintage-y tone of a filter to achieve great aesthetic. This is what is distinct about Instagram. Photos shared on other social media channels may not adhere to this vintage-y aesthetic or feel. Instagram photos are easily recognizable as being from Instagram! There are various blog posts and articles available online explaining [How to Choose the Best Filter for Your Instagram Photo](#). Which filter is best suited to the subject and purpose of your photo is an important consideration.

Consider each editing option within Instagram as a piece of the ‘aesthetic of Instagram’ puzzle. If you would like a refresher on the array of possibilities for your photos, we’ve reviewed these options in our [Instagram 101](#) module.

When taking or choosing your photo, try to achieve an angle that makes sense for the subject of your photo. Sometimes a POV (point of view) shot is most interesting; or perhaps looking on towards the immense nature of your subject looks best. Determine which angle works best for your subject, and what helps develop a nice tone for the purpose of your photograph. Everyone can appear to be an amazing photographer with a little help from Instagram’s editing options! And remember, practice makes perfect, so don’t be afraid to try out different approaches. If you don’t like your photo, simply delete it and try again!

Users Can ‘Window Shop’ Your Organization

By sharing relevant images that showcase your organization, Instagram users have the opportunity to better understand the services your organization offers, your mission or cause, the physical setting you operate in, and the overall atmosphere of your organization. Share pictures of your organization during a workday, or from a conference so that Instagram users can grasp a realistic feel of what it means to be a part of your organization. Post a ‘POV’ (point of view) shot of organizational activities to give your audience an organic perspective of a daily routine.

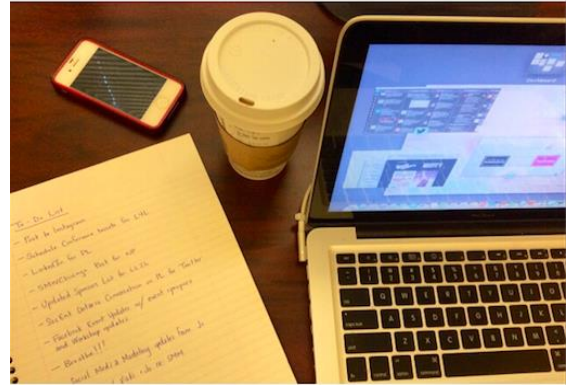


Instagram for Marketing



Here are a few Instagram photo ideas that could be posted to the photo-sharing platform to give users a better understanding of your organization:

- When attending a workshop or 'Lunch & Learn', share something visually stimulating and interesting with your audience. (For example, how are you taking notes or jotting things down at the workshop? How about giving us a sneak peek at your notebook!)
- Are you about to send out a registration package to your members for a conference or workshop? Show the audience who is hitting the send button at their desk, and how excited they are to do so!
- Showcase an employee or volunteer. Humanize your organization by highlighting their role. Showcase an important aspect of their day-to-day operations, or their role in putting on a special event. Take a look at [ConstantContact's](#) participation in [Tech Gives Back Day!](#)
- Highlight a customer, client, or donor. Get to the heart of your values and mission by sharing with your audience an office visit or interaction between your organization and a learner, client or donor.



- ♥ joannekaattari, kuhcoon
- ♥ love4literacy Our #SocialMedia Marketing Assistant, @megharmer is back in the office after a short summer hiatus! On her 'to-do' list: breathe!



constantcontact

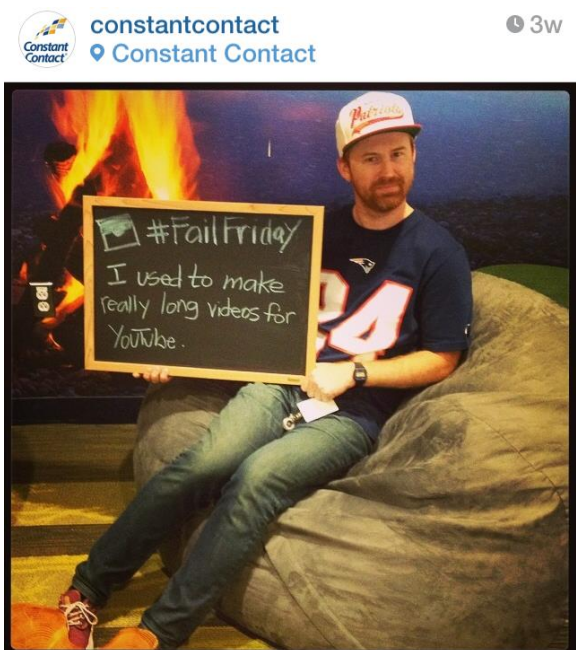
2w



When posting images that include faces or identities of staff members, clients, volunteers, or community stakeholders ensure that you have proper permission from those individuals. For more information on privacy and safety when using social media, take a look at this helpful [module](#).

Humanize Your Organization

The heart and soul of an organization are the staff and volunteers who dedicate their time and talents to your cause. Highlight their efforts, and follow up by visually showcasing them on Instagram. Humanizing your organization is as simple as connecting the faces of the people who are a part of your organization with its daily happenings. ConstantContact now posts a [#FailFriday](#) campaign post every Friday, showing an employee admitting their past social media mistakes. ConstantContact explains alternative best practices in the accompanying text. Here are a few #FailFriday posts:



This #FailFriday campaign is simple and driven by the content and ideas that its employees produce and share: that's organic content! Showcase (with permission) volunteers, clients, employees, your board, or partners associated with your organization through Instagram. Bringing people to the forefront of your organization's interactions on social media allows your audience to get a feel for the organizational culture, and the faces behind the phones and computer screens.

When faces of our organizations are brought to the forefront, then our values and mission become more prominent and tangible to our stakeholders. Share information about what your organization is up to!



Some organizations offer their audiences an "Instagram Takeover" weekly or monthly. A representative (i.e., staff member, volunteer, board member, etc.) of the organization will post from the organizational Instagram account for a set amount of time to offer their unique perspective. Instagram Takeovers are popular marketing strategies for brands on Instagram like [Lululemon](#). This also means that the job of managing the organizational Instagram account does not fall entirely on one person. Smaller organizations could consider having a volunteer or a board member participate in an Instagram Takeover.

Brands like Lululemon announce 'Instagram takeovers' almost monthly to showcase an athlete who believes in, and uses, their products. The brand's representative will post a few pictures daily that highlight their personal point of view, while also focusing on their association to the brand or organization.

Advanced marketing strategies, such as Instagram takeovers and event marketing, should be used by Instagram accounts that have developed an audience and are already a part of the Instagram community. Build a following and develop your organization's voice on Instagram before launching into advanced tactics that may drown out your organization's voice before it's properly built. Steer clear from this strategy until your tone and personality have been solidified within the Instagram community, and you have 1000+ followers.

Humanizing your organization, and showcasing the ‘behind the scenes’ aspects of your cause throughout all activity on your organization’s social media accounts, is a marketing strategy that will pay long-term dividends.

Implementing strategies to humanize your organization across all channels is important, but it is significantly easier to start doing this with a social network that is visually focused by its nature, like Instagram. Show us who you really are! Showcase the personality of your organization, staff, volunteers, clients and other stakeholders.

“There are a lot of things in a photo that someone can respond to, to promote conversation—then you get a wonderful interaction out of it...that’s what’s beautiful about being able to relate to photographs.”

– Zachary McClune, Instagram Researcher



Storytelling with Instagram

Tweets may be limited to 140 characters, but an Instagram photo is worth a thousand words! Captivating the attention and eyes of your audiences with colours, shapes, contrast, different subjects, and depths is very possible with Instagram. Telling your organization's story by aligning its mission with creativity and innovation, on a widely-used mobile application, is a very modern tactic for your organization's social media marketing campaign.



The visual nature of Instagram allows you to tell multiple stories with your pictures and posts. Your audience will be thinking, asking questions, and making inferences about what you've shared and how you've shared it. Every photo you share gives you an opportunity to make an impact on your audience, create intrigue, and show what your organization has to offer. Use these opportunities to the best of your ability and showcase your organization in a positive light!

Here's what [@creativeniche](#)'s audience will take away from the preceding photo almost immediately:

- They've partnered with [@momentumww](#) on this event in some capacity and have at least one employee or volunteer in attendance
- The event has a hashtag — [#creative2020](#)
- The event is being held in a modern, stylistic location with multiple attendees

Here's what someone encountering this brand for the first time may take away:

- [Creativeniche](#) is involved with, or hosts an event series for, creative professionals
- Their brand brings like-minded people together in physical spaces

Here's what the visuals say:

- The event is tech-friendly (a lot of people are looking down at their mobile devices!)
- The audience is full of young professionals
- The modern, artistic venue is visually appealing
- Event setup is casual, yet professional, and instills a desire to attend

A photograph of an event is more than simply a photo. This Instagram post tells a story of the brand, the people in attendance, and it contributes to the overall personality and tone of the digital agency responsible for taking the photo.

A strategy to market your organization on Instagram should be developed with purpose in mind, and the motivation to accomplish these goals will be reached with team collaboration, thinking outside of the box, and keeping your organization's personality, values and mission at the centre of all your efforts.

When developing your strategy for Instagram, ask yourself what you want the world to know and think about your organization?



Content Management on Instagram

When Should I Post a Photo?

Post an aesthetically pleasing photo to your organization's Instagram account if the photo:

- Is posted at a time that's been determined strategically (i.e., to increase awareness about an event, giving your audience a realistic amount of time to make plans to attend, or to showcase an event while it's occurring and to instill a 'fear of missing out' in your digital audience);
- Promotes your organization's values, mission, or vision in a way that your audience will understand, feel compelled by, and identify with;
- Aligns with current global, national, or local events in a playful or strategic way (e.g., The ALS Ice Bucket challenge, the Olympics, International Literacy Day, or political or celebrity news).



How Often Should I Post?

Normally, it would be surprising if a small nonprofit organization would be able to successfully create more than one photo per work week that is strategic, compelling to the Instagram community, aesthetically pleasing, and relevant to the organization's audience.

However, the rate at which you post is likely to increase while hosting or attending conferences, events or workshops. Take these opportunities to connect with digital audiences and people who are interested in your cause. Conferences, workshops and special events provide your organization with a perfect opportunity to let its voice be heard, and its photos be seen!

If you are new to Instagram, it is best to focus on producing high **quality** content rather than posting a high **quantity** of photos to your account. Posting 1 to 5 photos per month is a realistic starting point for most organizations just beginning to familiarize themselves with Instagram.

Do I Need an Editorial Calendar?

When posting as the voice of an organization on social media, it is important to ensure you are doing so strategically, and with the organization's marketing strategy firmly in mind. Consider the organization's long-term and short-term goals. **Post with purpose!**

Having an editorial calendar for your posts will create consistency for your strategy and will add value to the purpose with which you post. Maintaining a high level of organization for your marketing on social media, and ensuring that the representation of your organization's personality is consistent and strategic will help to ensure your long-term and short-term goals are being considered.

As well, if multiple people are posting to your social media accounts, having an editorial calendar will mean that everyone is clear about timelines, content and strategy.

An editorial calendar does not have to be complex, but it should outline the type of content being posted, the broad reason for posting this content, who is responsible, and timelines.



Barriers to Engagement on Instagram

Sharing Bad Photos

By sharing a photo that holds little value to your target audience, your content will deter people from following your Instagram account. If a user is considering clicking 'Follow', he or she will surely review your last few posts to see if they peak interest.

If a mistake is made in the photo you've shared, or in the text descriptor accompanying the photo, delete the photo as soon as possible and replace it with the intended message. If the photo was also shared via other platforms, be sure to delete it wherever applicable.

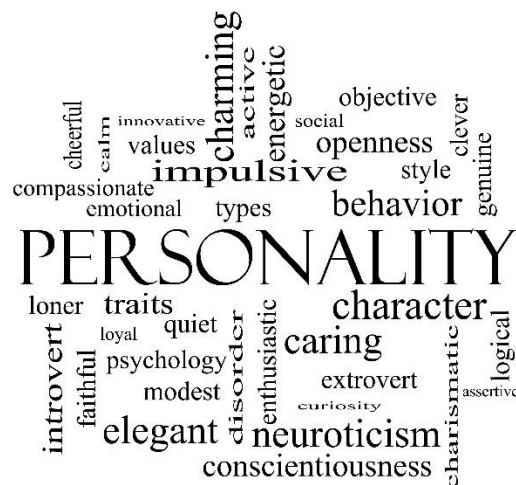
For example, if an Instagram photo with incorrect information was also tweeted out and shared over Twitter, ensure the photo was deleted on both social media platforms.

Always make sure that content being shared by your organization is high quality, relevant, accurate, and meaningful to your target audience.

Inconsistent Personality

If you are not 100% certain about the way your organization's personality should be showcased to the Instagram community, the audience you are trying to reach won't be either.

Your personality should shine through the visuals and accompanying text of each of your posts, and should be consistent to the people who will encounter your organization on your other social media accounts.



Each of your posts on Instagram should give audience members a bite-sized look at who you are as an organization. The Instagram community should be able to accurately guess one or two keywords of your strategy, values, or mission by simply looking at an Instagram post.



A Private or Protected Profile

If your organizational profile is “protected” (this is also known as private), this will serve as a barrier for anyone to publicly encounter or stumble upon your profile. When an account is protected, an individual would be required to know the exact name and online location of your profile in order to find it, and would be required to request to “follow” updates. As an organization, it’s important that your accounts are public and available for general consumption so that the highest number of possible followers and audience members may encounter your photos. It’s fine to make your personal account private, but when it comes to your organization and social media marketing, the purpose is to make your accounts as open and accessible as possible. After all, if no one can see your account, they aren’t learning about the great work you do!

Lack of Context

Don’t leave your audience members hanging or guessing while looking at your photo! Provide context to your photos with accompanying text and hashtags to allow the Instagram community to feel included in whatever topic or event you are posting about. If your posts are confusing to someone who is encountering your organization for the first time, you may have lost out on potential followers and allies to your cause. Don’t lose out on support due to a lack of context. Be sure to add interesting and informative context to your photos and posts.

Inactivity

There is no quicker way to be disregarded as an organization than for your information to be outdated. Your social media profiles are ways for public audiences to seek out information about you and therefore they must be updated consistently. If inactive for a period of three to four weeks, or longer, your Instagram account will lose its credibility. Remain active and contribute to the Instagram community in order to remain current and interesting to users who stumble across your account, and to users who are seeking you out specifically on the photo-sharing network. As we mentioned earlier, remaining active does not have to be overwhelming; posting once per week would be sufficient for many small organizations.



Provide Other Ways to Connect With Your Organization

In order to keep your community close and connected, ensure you include a link to your website in your account profile, so that Instagram users can obtain general information about your organization. As well, be sure to cross-promote other social media accounts that your organization holds.

Here are a few simple ideas on how to cross-promote your organization on Instagram:

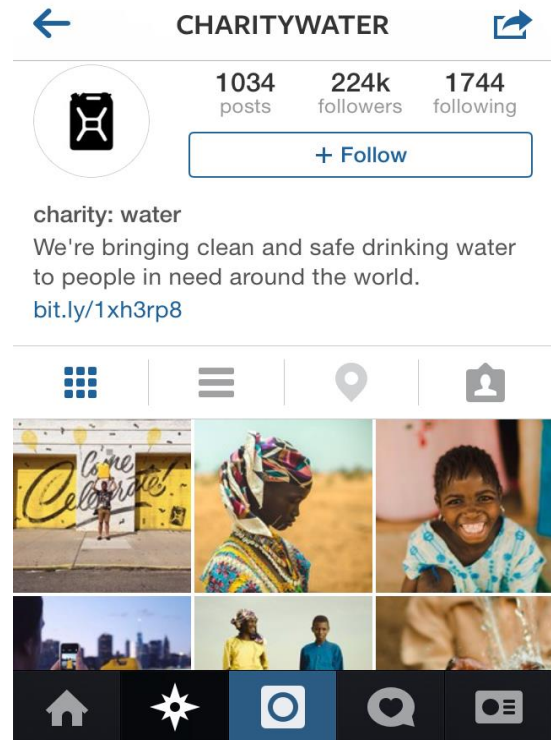
- Include a hashtag being used for an event or contest on Twitter (learn more about hashtags [here](#)).
- Photograph contact information for a key employee in a visual capacity—for example, on a newly printed business card. However, be sure that you have received the proper permission to make the information public.
- Photograph an artsy picture of the intersection your office is closest to and provide general contact information for your organization. Do this with a specific purpose in mind—why would your followers want or need to get in contact with you?
- Create an image or graphic to highlight a few employee Twitter accounts, what do they tweet about and why would the Instagram community want to follow them?



Examples of Marketing on Instagram

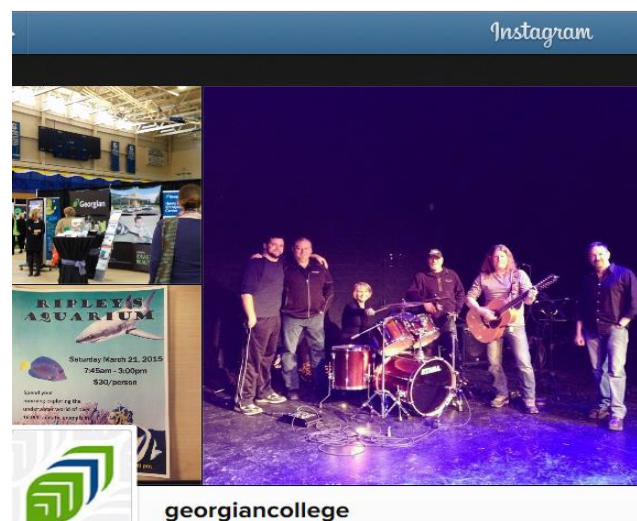
Charity Water

- Charity Water has a clear and relevant username
- They give a brief explanation of their organization's mission with an accompanying link to more information on [Charity Water](#), how to donate, and how to become involved in their campaigns
- They share vibrant, clear photos that evoke an emotional and immediate response



Georgian College

- Georgian College has a dynamic Instagram account, designed to promote the college
- They host contests, showcase college events and strive to link with students, their community and other stakeholders with engaging photos



Instagram for Marketing



United Nations Foundation

- The United Nations Foundations shares a brief explanation of their mission with an accompanying link to more information on how to donate and become involved in their campaigns
- They share vibrant, clear pictures and videos associated with their Instagram campaign to count down the “Millenium Development Goals on the World’s to-do List”
- They include unique graphics to highlight the importance of each of the tasks on the ‘World’s to-do list’ in an effort to raise awareness of global problems

← UNFOUNDATION →



378 posts 28k followers 68 following

+ Follow

United Nations Foundation

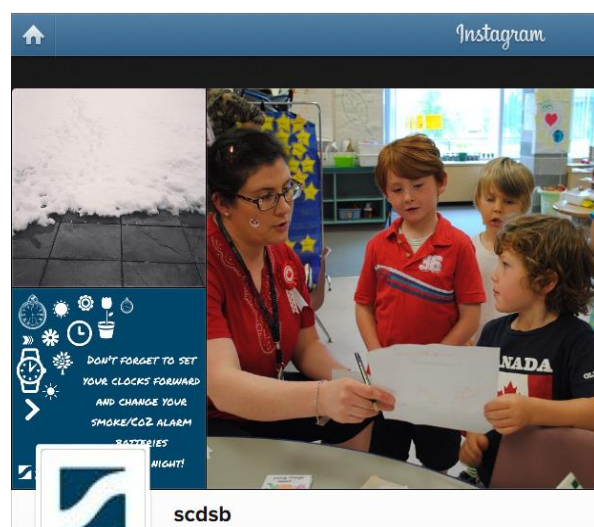
Connecting people, ideas, and resources with the United Nations to solve global problems.

www.unfoundation.org



Simcoe County District School Board

- The Simcoe County District School Board effectively uses their Instagram account to promote local schools as welcoming and inclusive places to learn
- They also share inspirational quotes, learning resources, and information for parents and students



Additional Marketing Resources

- [Instagram's Business Blog](#) (via [Instagram](#))
 - In this blog, business experts at Instagram provide organizations with campaign ideas and other effective ways to use Instagram.
- [Top 5 Instagram Best Practices for Nonprofits](#) (via [Nonprofit Tech for Good](#))
 - This article explains five basic practices for posting on Instagram as a nonprofit organization, including strategic hashtagging, third party applications to spruce up your photography skills, and re-gramming.
- [The Instagram account of the police department in Reykjavik, Iceland has gone viral!](#) (By the Weather Network)

This article highlights how the Instagram account of the Reykjavik Police Department went viral due to its highly engaging content. After all, who doesn't like to see an Icelandic police officer doing handstands in the snow!





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