



Online Accounting Software

INSTAGRAM GUIDE



One of the most significant changes to the digital world in the last 20 years has been the exponential increase in the number of photos and videos being uploaded and shared via social media. To both active participants and casual observers alike the sheer volumes are overwhelming – it's somewhere close to 2 billion images every day.

To the more learned community they have long recognised that our minds react differently to visual stimuli. In fact, the human brain deciphers image elements simultaneously, while language is decoded in a linear, sequential manner taking more time to process. Simply put, we process images far quicker than we do words.



The Use of Cameras Is Strictly Prohibited At All Times

Question: which did you process quicker / first, the image or the words?

The upshot of all of this is that social media platforms are the perfect conduit for sharing visuals online among individuals, groups, communities, nations and the world at large. So if we are genetically wired to decipher visuals quicker what does this mean for small businesses? In a busy and crowded marketplace how do we make ourselves heard? How do we stand out, build our brands and attract new customers? Fact is, when it comes to quick, clear communication, visuals outperform text almost every time.

Say hello to Instagram!

Some Key Points of Note:

- Instagram has 300 Million monthly active users.
- It has over 30 billion photos shared on the application.
- On an Average day 70 Million Photos are posted on Instagram along with the like button being pressed 2.5 Billion times.
- The average user spends 21 minutes per day using the app.
- 41% of all Instagram usage is within the 16-24 category and 35% among 24-34 age group.

What is Instagram?

Instagram is a social media platform that enables its members to share photos and short videos. Members are empowered with creative tools that they can use in the editing, filtering and sharing of photos and videos.

Instagram is a mobile app that you can download from the App Store or on Google Play. A web version is also available for use but it has very little of the functionality that is present on the mobile app. The key here is that Instagram is mobile focused.

Instagram is owned by Facebook (they reportedly paid \$19 billion dollars for it).

As of now there are no ads on Instagram which means you only see what you want to see.

Once someone follows you they will be notified of every single photo or video that you upload. This gives any photo you publish on your business Instagram profile great exposure to your followers. The trick of course is attracting and building a follower community.



Why Use Instagram for your small business?

Build Brand Awareness:

With 300 million active users using such a visual platform, Instagram provides a strong opportunity to build your brand's awareness.

The correct use of hashtags (which we will cover) can put your posts in front of a large audience. It is important that you provide good quality visual content that represents your brand positively or gives an insight into the personality of your company. As always, get your logo included whenever it is suitable to.

Remember, as we process images far quicker than we do words, a good picture of your brand will stay with your followers for far longer.

Increases Engagement:

An active Instagram account with useful and interesting content can generate high levels of engagement with your audience.

A recent study on over 3 million user interactions found that Instagram content generates 58 times more engagement per follower than Facebook and 120 times more than Twitter.

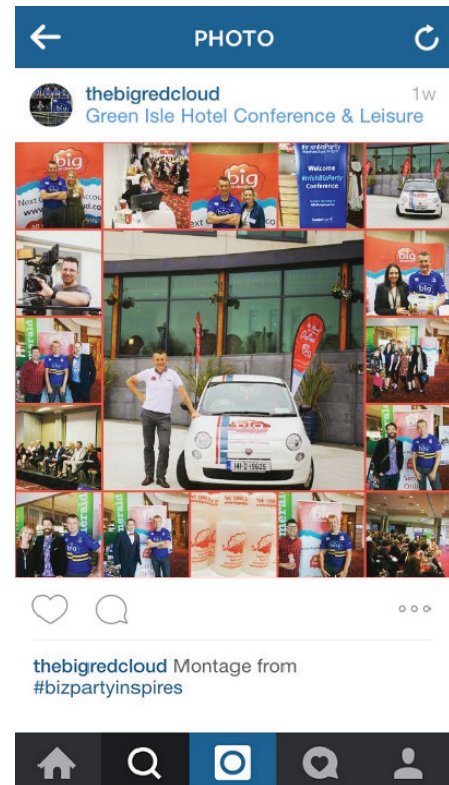
That's a strong endorsement of Instagram but please note the important word 'active.'

Building Trust and Personality:

People buy from people and if you are like the majority of other small businesses you probably sell to your local community, then building trust is key to long term success.

Instagram enables you to share the day-to-day experiences of your business which builds emotional connections over time.

Your personality – one that is woven into your brand – should shine through and be something that your community of followers like and trust.



Increase Your Social Media Reach:

Instagram enables you to share your images and videos direct from your Facebook page and also via Twitter. This sharing feature allows you to reach much bigger communities, communities that you may already have nurtured so getting your Instagram posts to them is very easy.

Gaining Competitive Advantage:

Get in while the going is good. Instagram is still a relatively new channel for small businesses so it's pretty much open season. You'll find that some sectors, such as Fast Moving Consumer Goods and B2C industries are taking to it more readily than others but the fact remains that there is huge opportunity for you to make some real positive noise for your business regardless of your business focus.

Reaching Target Market:

User demographics show that users born in the early 1980s up to the mid-1990s make up over 37% of the users on Instagram. We know that the digitally native or millennial babies love Instagram and by far make up the vast majority of its user base.

So, who is your target base? Those born in the 80s or those born post 2000. If you sell to either segment then you've access to a massive market.

No Paid Advertising:

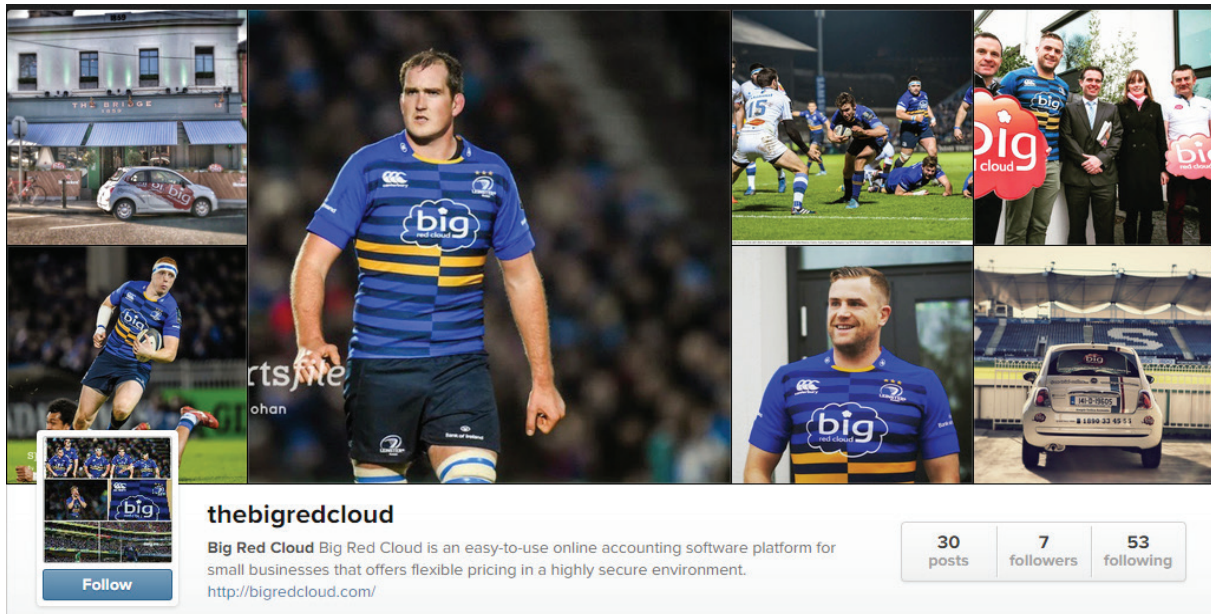
Instagram only shows pictures and videos that its users post, nothing else, no ads – presently. That's one of the reasons users love it; they only see what they want to see and no ad or brand interruptions, unless of course, they subscribe to a brand's account.

If you can generate interesting posts, or better still if your customers can, in and around your business, then as those posts are shared it's a great way for you to advertise your business.

Any doubts, go back to the 'Building Trust and Personality' section above



How to get started on Instagram?



It's really simple.

Download the Instagram App: Instagram can be downloaded from the App Store, Google Play Store or from the Windows Phone store depending on your actual mobile device.

Register your Account: Once you have downloaded the application from the relevant store you can then enter your very own email address or actually login with your own Facebook account which is the recommended suggestion. This will result in instant access to all your Facebook friends on Instagram through the options tab located in your account on your Instagram profile page.

Instagram on the web. You can actually access your Instagram account online through the following link (<https://instagram.com/>). The online version basically only allows you viewing functionality therefore everything has to be carried out through the mobile device.

Edit Profile: Once you have registered an account you can now add a profile picture (Big Red Cloud logo see above), along with a brief bio

(Big Red Cloud is an easy to..., see above) and a link to your website (www.BigRedCloud.com, see above).

Basic Information: To follow a company a user simply click on the follow button underneath the relevant profile picture as you can see above. Your Profile also tells you the number of posts on your page, the number of followers you have and the number of users you actually follow.

Find Friends: As mentioned already one of the best features about Instagram is how easy it is to find friends through Facebook. By simply clicking the options button on your mobile app and clicking on Facebook friends you can find all your contacts who have an Instagram account here.

Follow Friends: The overall aim of Instagram is to both follow and get people to follow your account back. By following people/brands you can both take notice and get noticed building a particular fan base around your Instagram page.

Add Photos: At the end of the day Instagram is all about photo sharing. It is all well and good getting followers to your profile but the key to keeping them and building upon your follower base is to provide fun, interesting and insightful photos into your company's life that will be of particular importance to you and your audience.

Filter Photos: Filtering photos is a huge part of Instagram. Firstly, to get access to your photo library, simply click on the middle button that looks like a camera at the bottom of your screen. You will then be granted access to all your photos in your photo library.

Once you select the photo you want to upload it will bring you to the filter section. There are over 20 different filters available on Instagram with many more features available also to make your photo look exactly the way you want it.

The whole idea behind the filter is to make the photo as good as it possible can depending on the quality of the camera.



Hashtags (#): Once the photo has been decided on it is now time to create your caption. The use of hashtags is key here.

The power of the # cannot be over emphasised when it comes to Instagram. It is a great way to get people outside of your own fan base to take notice of your profile. It's not necessarily the more hashtags you use the better but the more popular or relevant they are.

Creating a hashtag means that if some searches for example 'Sponsor For A Day' they will come across the photo the Big Red Cloud shared above provided their account isn't on private.

Simply writing a sentence is perfectly fine. The use of hashtags is more about trying to draw attention to this particular photo for new users.

Likes & Comments: If a person appreciates a particular photo he/she will give it a like. You also have the possibility of sharing a comment underneath a particular photo. The more likes (not necessarily

comments) you get the better your photo is perceived within the Instagram community.

@ Symbol: Similar to Twitter every username requires the @ symbol in front of their Instagram name if you want to interact with them directly.

For example if you want to attach a user to a new post by using @ symbol you can add the user to your post or comment. An example of this would be if you wanted the Big Red Cloud to take notice of a new Instagram post you have created, simply adding @thebigredcloud to your post will make them aware of your of it as well as your followers.

User Generated Content (UGC):

The best way for businesses to gain publicity on Instagram is to simply create context for fans to share photos, such as competitions or taking photos with your team at events you attend.

One of the key features of Instagram is the power of the **Hashtag (#)** as we discussed above. By putting a # before a word it makes it a lot easier for Instagram user to find your posts.

Integrated campaigns:

One great initiative for generating publicity around your Instagram business profile when you begin to use Instagram is to create an online campaign that leverages Instagram's integration with Twitter and Facebook.

By sharing your campaign on your Facebook and Twitter accounts while using a Hashtag the new account will now be exposed to a wider audience. This is because Twitter and Facebook use hashtags the same way that Instagram does. If a user then enters the hashtag into Instagram search, all the photos related to the hashtag will now appear. This will result in new followers, more likes and more exposure to your social media campaigns across various channels helping you to build the foundations of a solid fan base.

Putting It All Together:

We have covered quite a lot but the only way to get started with your Instagram account is to get started. As with any social media platform, sometimes it can be confusing to figure out exactly what to do once you have set your account up. Here are some guiding principles for you which double as a summarised version of the guide.

1. Post powerful imagery

People process visuals much quicker and memorably than text. Like any platform you should be publishing excellent, valuable content so make sure your images tick those boxes. Instagram's image editing capabilities are perfect companion for this.

2. Show some personality

People interact with people. Show off the personality and values of your business through photos to build brand loyalty and an emotionally invested community rather than just a number of followers beside your name.

3. Link to your website

Where can we find out more about you after building a relationship with your brand?

4. Use hashtags

Remember to use the right hashtags for your images and you'll see real engagement and the growth of your community will accelerate.

5. Integrated Campaigns

Remember that you can integrate Instagram with Facebook and Twitter to help establish your account and run integrate campaigns across various social media platform. If you're posting images, use Instagram to edit them before you push them out to your followers across all three social networks.



Online Accounting Software

WHO WE ARE

Big Red Cloud is a leading supplier of online account's software to the SME market.

Our online account's software is simple and easy to use and takes only minutes to set up. It is designed to enable smart business people get on with doing what they do best which is to sell their products or services.

We believe in giving exceptional value by including multiple users, unlimited transactions, telephone, email, live chat support and free access for your accountant and bookkeeper, all for a low monthly fee.

Join over 35,000 businesses that have already made the smart move and get your business up and running with Big Red Cloud's online accounts software.

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