5 Steps

TO BRAND INSTAGRAM FOR YOUR Creative Business

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Hello Gorgeous!

Welcome to my workbook on the 5 steps to brand Instagram for your creative business! I'm so excited to share with you the same steps I used to double my Instagram following in 4 months organically, without gimmicks, or paying for followers!

I'm Michaela; I've created this workbook outlining the exact steps I've taken to help grow my own Instagram following. While I would love there to be a quick easy way to gain massive amounts of genuine followers, there is no substitute for a little hard work.

This book will help you get clarity on why you are posting to Instagram. It will help you identify strength & weaknesses of your current feed. It will also help you brainstorm ways to reach more of your ideal clients on Instagram.

I absolutely love Instagram it is by far my favorite social media platform to hang out on. I also really enjoy a beautifully curated feed that speaks to me. I've used my experience about who I follow on Instagram and researched the whys, the strengths, and the weaknesses of these accounts in order to strengthen my own.

So let's get started! Branding your Instagram isn't just using your logo and website colors. It is using your mission, brand values, and your story to decide what to share and how to share it on Instagram.





Step One						
Your Profile						
Your profile is a perfect opportunity to start branding your Instagram.						
Below is a checklist for you to review your current profile.						
Make sure your profile is showing off your personality. Instagram is very lifestyle based and is the perfect place to show off more of your sparkly personality. If you love emojis sprinkle them in, let someone know an interesting fact about you, or use your business' tag line.						
Is in line with your brand's mission. If you are using your feed for business you will want to make sure that your profile info is also in line with what your brand's mission is. You don't want to leave out important business information like what you do or who you serve. I've come across Instagram users who own a business (I found their feed through their website) and their bio reads something like this "mama. student. pizza lover." This is the first impression someone will have of you, make it work for you! You've got 150 characters for your profile make the most of it.						
Is clear. Is your profile clearly stating what you do? Is it written in a way that makes sense? Are there any typos or misspellings?						
Is On Brand. When I say on brand I mean does it fit well with your other brand messaging materials. Yes, this platform is different than the others and you want to tweak the profile for this specific service but it should still feel like an extension of other messaging you have online.						







Why are you posting?

This changed my WHOLE perspective on posting to Instagram. Before I got serious about using Instagram for my business I would post things randomly, when I thought they were interesting as a peek inside my life.

It's great to share peeks behind the scenes but they should be a part of your content plan, not because you don't know what else to share or it is time to post and you've got nothing else.

Plan your feed and ask why you want to share this?

Is it because you want to grow awareness about one of your products? Get visible? Grow your social media following? Connect with your followers?

Knowing the why behind your post will let you craft the caption to strategically reach your goals and to provide value with each of your posts.

On the next page I've written 5 types of content you can share on Instagram and have given you space to brainstorm the reasons you would want to share that style of post. Then I'll show you how to take that information to craft a caption that helps you reach those goals.





Behind the scenes
Quote
Testimonial
Business Related Post
Гір

Example: Tip - visibility, position myself as an expert, connect with my ideal client

Caption Example

Hey friends! I know when it comes to understanding the analytics for your online business you struggle knowing where to even start. It is worth the time it takes to learn. It can give you insights into what content is popular, where people are coming from, and help you create a strategic plan based on repurposing older popular content on your site.







Consistency & Cohesiveness

Instagram is very visual, and you want your visuals to be on point because of this. You can use stock photos, create your own branded stock photos, or take photos when you are out and about. You just have to make sure they are all similar in look and feel.

You can use dark and moody images/graphics but if you drop in a bright white snap of your living room you are going to create a little bit of inconsistency in your feed. It isn't necessarily a bad thing you just need to revisit the previous slide and make sure that all those answers are in line with your brand.

The problem really comes from having a feed that is all over the place, bright airy image one time, dark and moody, dark & blurry cell phone pic. It might be frustrating to not publish that photo you took during dinner last night but if it doesn't fit with the aesthetic you are creating then pick an image that does fit.

It is ok, to plan out your feed ahead of time. You need to find what works for you. If you like having a structure well ahead of time because posting consistently doesn't happen otherwise that is totally fine. If you like to have a few spots each week that you post in a more organic matter that is fine. But you should schedule a chunk of your posts so that you don't loose track of time and forget to post.





Make notes about the lighting, editing styles & colors you like from other Instagram feeds. Start narrowing down the style, lighting & colors you are going to aim for in your own feed.					







Taking & Editing Photos

When you take your own photos for your Instagram feed keep the following in mind.

Lighting. Use natural light as much as possible. Turn off all the other lights in the room, get close to a window and snap away. The best part of natural light is the colors are going to be more accurate to life and you won't get any of those strange orange/blue casts with it that you might if you use a lamp.

Focus. A blurry photo is a blurry photo. Make sure that your photos are sharp where they are supposed to be. If they aren't just don't post them period. It will make your feed look unprofessional and sloppy.

Editing. I use Afterlight for editing my photos. I've played around with the different adjustments to get a bright airy look then found a filter that I apply and reduce the strength of the filter to create a consistent look in my feed. There are all kinds of apps out there that will help you edit your pictures right on your phone & even more filters that you can use to create a consistent look to your images. Explore & play around to find what you like.





Keep track of how you edit your Instagram images in the space below. Make notes of what filters, adjustments & strengths you use. Reference this sheet until it becomes second nature for you to edit your images consistently.						







Finding Your Hashtags

Hashtags can be a bit of a mystery for some but they don't have to be. Think of them as a sorting system for the images on Instagram. If you don't tag that beautiful snowflake wedding cake you decorated with #snowflake when people search on Instagram your image wont come up.

Each image is allowed up to 30 hashtags. Use them. There is no argument here to be made about using less. You can choose to put hashtags in the caption for the image or put them as the first comment when you post. I've seen it done many different ways it is entirely up to what you like.

Use 10 hashtags to tag the info in the caption and image Example, #coffee #makewavesmonday, #lists, #flowers

Use 20 hashtags to target your ideal client Example, #womeninbusiness, #creativebiz, #smallbiz, #heartcentered

Use 5 hashtags that are business specific related. Example #mycreativebiz, #makersgonnamake, #handsandhustle #calligraphy

Play around with different combinations to find what works best for you.





Brainstorm hashtags you can use to target your ideal clients. Brainstorm hashtags that are specific to the business you are in. Search online & make a note about which daily hashtags you can use throughout the week.						





Bonus typs

Posting

If you are wanting to grow your following plan to post 2 times a day. I really like this format because it gives me a chance to provide a value post where I share knowledge and a more personal/inspirational/motivational posts to connect with my followers. You can post up to 4 times but spread them out throughout the day. Don't overwhelm your followers with a zillion posts at once.

Quote Templates

To save yourself some time and create a cohesive feel for your feed turn all those quotes you are saving on Pinterest into branded graphics. Brand them for your own Instagram feed. Use Canva, Illustrator, or Photoshop to create a file with your colors, images & fonts ready to go & drop in those quotes you've got pinned to Pinterest.







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And remember to check out how I can help you with your branding and online presence at

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