# How To Create Your Instagram Content Plan (With Free Template) via @sejournal, @donutcaramel13

Are your Instagram posts struggling to gain traction?

With over 2 billion monthly active users, standing out on the platform requires strategy and content planning.

A content plan is an essential blueprint to help you keep your posts aligned with your strategy and your overall marketing goals.

Posting without a plan can just be a wasted effort without clear direction.

To support your brand's conversion and success, this guide has a free Instagram content plan template and helpful tips that you can customise for your brand.

So, let's try to capture some of those users.

## 1. Create Your Content Calendar

A well-structured plan is your roadmap to guide your path, help you meet your goals, and schedule campaigns effectively.

For this purpose, our template comes with an Overview tab and monthly planning tabs with flexible weekly layouts to give you a bird's-eye view of your content.

It will help you know when you've met your goal and can readjust and analyze ways to improve your content strategy for your next one.

Plus, an Instagram content plan can keep ideas, budgets, themes, and marketing initiatives categorized. It also helps you identify any content gaps and build consistency – a key to Instagram success.

Start by downloading your Instagram content plan and make a copy for yourself.

Screenshot by author, July 2025

Begin with the Overview tab by outlining campaign cycles, including key conversion goals, strategic themes, and content pillars with associated budgets.

Move to the main weekly sheet to refine execution. Decide topics and post type, craft appropriate captions, align with campaign types, and define CTAs that support your marketing

funnel objectives.

Finally, after you have the above laid out and initial captions, you can move to the next step: Create or assign the necessary key visuals or assets.

Breaking content planning into smaller, actionable steps makes it easier to create a content calendar.

## Bonus Tip: Sync With Existing Marketing Initiatives

With a helpful overview or dashboard (included in our Instagram Content Plan), you can map out your seasonal themes, align your topics with days you’re posting, and have your captions and hashtags ready to easily copy and paste when you’re ready to schedule your content.

Screenshot by author, July 2025

If you already have some marketing initiatives, it’s the perfect time to incorporate them into your marketing campaign. For example, maybe you have a new product release.

You can then build a content series around it. Tease the product release with a few posts, run a giveaway, feature an influencer using the product in a video, and highlight key benefits throughout.

Events and holidays offer opportunities to boost engagement and attract new customers. They are another fun and positive way to get customers talking about your brand. Holiday giveaways or deals are another way to grow brand awareness and gain followers.

If you have an event coming up, you can create a campaign hyping the event and discussing the speakers involved, products that will be there, or awesome grab bags you're giving away at the event.

We recommend pairing our Marketing Calendar for 2025 when creating your Instagram content plan to tie in your creative campaigns with holidays and seasonal themes for the week, month, or even quarter.

## 2. Define Your Goals

Once you have your content template and before you plan your posts, what you want to do is create your Instagram goals.

What do you want to accomplish? Is it to grow your audience, drive more engagement, or increase product sign-ups?

Once you know this, you can set the key performance indicators (KPIs) to mark different points of analysis you want to observe along with your Instagram campaign.

For example, you want to grow your audience by 20% by the end of the campaign cycle, or you wish to increase your engagement rate to at least 0.43%.

After you select your conversion goals, it's beneficial to break down your goal into milestones you would like to reach.

This way, you can map out the type of content needed for each and track your progress using the KPIs you've set above.

Screenshot from author, July 2025

Ask yourself: What milestones can you mark to achieve that goal along the way? What types of content, topics, or content series can you create to increase engagement?

Write down all the goals you think your brand can reasonably achieve (Pro tip: the trick is to make it SMART).

## 3. Keep Your Theme And Tone Consistent

If you want to keep your posts engaging, ensure visual and tonal consistency by developing a brand guide. You'll also want to maintain a cohesive theme across all posts, including style, typography, and color palette.

For inspiration, you can look at your website, content, and logos to help create the proper tone and theme for your posts.

Think about the look of your content for both pictures and videos, and consider a consistent angle or filter to set the right tone and look for your content.

It’s also vital to create standard operating procedures (SOPs) about your messaging, whether for captions, comments, or responses to direct messages, because chances are, multiple people are managing the account.

How you respond to consumers on Instagram matters, especially if you have multiple people responding to comments and messages, to ensure it’s within the brand’s tone.

# 4. Showcase Your Creativity: Instagram Post Types (With Examples)

Instagram is more than just an aesthetic photo-sharing app. It’s a significant platform that can showcase your product in different formats to entertain, engage, and educate audiences.

There are various ways to create content for Instagram that can highlight your brand and increase engagement.

Let’s talk through them for best practices for each use case:

## Photos

Pictures are a great way to showcase products’ USPs, share thought leadership quotes, relatable memes, or announce new feature updates.

It’s also great for posing questions that you can answer in your image caption, or promoting deals or giveaways through the use of compelling captions.

- **Example**: HubSpot’s AI-generated meme of its customer service rep as a toy figure catches attention and serves as a conversation starter.

## Carousels

What can your company do when you have multiple photos from your high-end photoshoot but don’t want to post them into a grid or oversaturate your feed? Try beautifully crafted carousels to ensure return on investment (ROI).

Carousels have been a mainstay on Instagram since 2015. It is a collection of 10 photos you can post all at once, now expandable up to 20.

To entice your audience, make it interesting to swipe right with chronological storytelling, collage/magazine cutout elements, text overlays, or a narrative.

- **Example**: Clickup’s photo of its new AI calendar features text overlay, seamlessly transitioning between both static and dynamic photos and tutorial short videos.

## Reels

Next, videos are an excellent way to show sneak peeks of something coming up or create product teasers. You can also use videos for behind-the-scenes content to build product hype.

Consider using Instagram Reels, or short videos, to showcase products, share stories, and grow your audience.

By the way, Instagram discontinued IGTV, or Instagram TV, back in 2021, but you can post longer videos in-feed. Brands use these to go more in-depth into describing a particular topic.

## Stories

Meanwhile, Stories are photos or videos that last 24 hours (unless you add them to your highlights on your profile), where you can share posts from your profile or post new content.

It’s a popular way to gain more followers and engage with consumers.

- **Example**: Even if Stories expire after 24 hours, they still remain valuable. Sprout Social curated its Stories into its “Trending” highlights, showcasing key events and social media insights, such as the Oscars, Coachella, and Art Basel.

## User Generated Content (UGC)

User-generated content, or content created by influencers, customers, or other users, is a great way to extend your reach to different audiences and further promote your products.

People are more intrigued to learn about a new product if it’s promoted by someone they already follow. Likewise, it can help build trust with consumers new to your brand if they see a post by a customer who already loves it.

- **Example:** Slack featured its No. 1 “Slacker,” Rox (a senior social media manager at Gozney), as a fun UGC post, where she apparently sent the most Slack messages in a year.

But what content goes viral? It can be beneficial to look at what your competitors are posting on Instagram and put your brand’s unique twist on it.

# 5. Craft Compelling Captions And CTAs

While it’s great to have high-quality pictures and engaging videos, the captions and call to action still matter.

If you hooked the consumer with your picture or video, you still want to reel them in with your caption and CTA.

Screenshot by author, July 2025

It’s essential to craft the right CTA to ensure consumers follow your page, engage with your post, or purchase your product.

Consider A/B testing to identify the right approach for your

campaigns. A compelling call-to-action is clear, concise, and written in an active voice.

## 6. Choose The Correct Hashtags

Researching and choosing the right hashtags is crucial to ensure your posts reach the intended audience and some new ones that might be interested in your niche and brand.

Hashtags allow your content to reach users beyond your profile's following as you create content for specific hashtags. Note which posts perform particularly well.

That way, you can create future posts for specific hashtags that will increase your content's visibility to a broader audience, helping you achieve more brand awareness.

## 7. Know The Best Time To Post

Planning posts ahead of time can help alleviate some stress from social media strategy.

You can use Meta Business Suites to schedule posts for Facebook and Instagram and set posts for a week or a couple of weeks.

If you're unsure when to post, here are suggested days and times where analysis points to where you'll get the most engagement and views.

It would be beneficial to do some research specific to your industry to see the best time and day for you to make your posts.

One important thing to keep in mind when you're planning your content is the upcoming holidays.

Are you going to post celebrating the holiday, use the holiday to do a promotion or give away, or choose not to post on that

day altogether?

No matter what you pick, keeping holidays in mind is crucial.

## 8. Measure Results And Adjust

Instagram Insights, both on the app and through Meta Business Suites, can show how many views a post gets and statistics on the engagement with the posts to help you see which types of content are working best. You can see your content’s likes, shares, comments, and saves.

Brands can also use Insights to get metrics on the paid activity. Insights are a great way to see trends so that you can adjust your content strategy.

You’ll also be able to see metrics about your followers to see how many you’re receiving, the age of your followers, and information on when they are most active online. This way, you can adjust your post times to ensure you are better at reaching your audience.

Aside from Instagram Insights, explore methods for measuring social media impact beyond vanity metrics to gain deeper insight into customer sentiment and overall brand performance.

## Wrapping Up

If your Instagram isn’t getting results, it may be due to a lack of planning.

Don’t miss the opportunity to tie your conversion goals, marketing campaigns, trends, holidays, and creative campaigns together and give it the well-planned, in-advance budget it deserves.

It can only help, not hurt, to create a proactive content plan for your social media team to stay aligned, maintain

consistency, and deliver measurable results.

Achieving your goals by developing an Instagram-specific content calendar guided by current marketing objectives and data-driven themes will help your brand engage on the platform.

Download our Instagram content plan and start being more effective with your Instagram strategy.

**More Resources:**

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*Featured Image: Paulo Bobita/Search Engine Journal*

https://www.searchenginejournal.com/how-to-create-your-instagram-content-plan-free-template/546258/