Instagram Engagement Pods — Should You Use Them?



Give it a shot, but there are more effective ways to increase your following.

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Ever since Instagram switched its feed from chronological to algorithm-based, content creators have been forced to find new and — ahem, creative — ways to beat the algorithm. Because Instagram now serves posts it deems relevant and engaging based on a multitude of factors, people are trying to inflate engagement on their posts in hopes of being picked up by the algorithm.

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One creative way is Instagram engagement pods.

What are pods?

Pods are groups of Instagrammers who get together to like and comment on each other’s posts. It’s pretty important for a new post to get likes and comments as fast as it can to demonstrate its worthiness of more exposure. If you have a group of people engaging with your post as soon as it goes up, you are giving a head start to each post.

How do you find a pod and become a part of it?

Most of the time, pods are made up of people who do not know each other in real life. It’s better to find pods that are based on the same niche or topic. There is also a multitude of other factors that may or may not be included in the “pod rules,” such as the number of followers on your account, geography, etc.

There are Instagram handles and Facebook groups where you can search for a pod, as well as the latest craze – Telegram group chats.

Since Instagram is working hard at cracking down “black hat” methods and engagement inflation techniques, it is rumored that the platform may block group chats reminiscent of pods, or may even ban accounts with such activity. If that’s the case, moving to Telegram makes it a bit safer for paranoid pod users.

Now, in a true entrepreneurial spirit, as soon as Instagram pods became popular and widespread technique to gain engagement, a variety of third-party tools popped up that help you manage pods and activity expected of you.

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For example, there are lots of Telegram pods with thousands upon thousands of users in them. Clearly, it'd be insane to manually like and comment on each post. So what do you do? You pay a small fee for a service that automatically likes and comments on every link in the pod. Yes, people do that.

While rules differ from group to group, a lot of larger groups have a specific time frame when everyone "drops their links" and everyone has to immediately go off and engage with these links. Failure to do so may result in your being thrown out of the group.

Do pods really work?

It is hard to say. First of all, a lot of it depends on the quality of a pod. There are some smaller, really niche pods where people genuinely try to help each other out. However, the majority of the time, there are at least some people who leach on pods and try to gain engagement without doing their part of the work. It is especially difficult to track these people down within pods with thousands of members.

Secondly, there are pods popping up every day, and most of them do not get more than 10 to 15 users. Depending on the quality of your content and the size of your following, 10 additional likes does not make such a huge difference for your engagement.

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Finally, there are pods that accept everyone and anyone. Let's say these people do like and comment on your posts, but are they your target audience? Most likely, they are not. So, while you get a few more engagements here and there, they are

not targeted and do not contribute anything to your bottom line.

In addition to all of these, participating in pods is really time-consuming – like, very time-consuming. You could have spent the same amount of time promoting your content and genuinely engaging with other people in your target audience.

Plus, if your posts receive 100 likes on average, and then all of a sudden, your posts start to receive upwards of 500 likes, it just looks suspicious. Modern consumer and social media users, for that matter, can instantly spot that something is going on in the backend.

So, while I will not urge you to completely ignore Instagram pods, I do think that there far more effective ways to promote your content and gain followers, and as a result, land more sales.

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