INSTAGRAM

Cultivating audience engagement through photos and videos. Instagram has one billion active users. Although Instagram often is thought of as a platform for individuals to share moments with people, more and more companies, organizations and institutions are leveraging the power of "the gram." Instagram is a direct way for an organization to build and reinforce its brand, reach new audiences, engage current supporters, share ideas and insights and uplift its work.

Strategize

Like all outreach, Instagram should begin with strategy. When thinking about your strategy, take a look at the audiences in your Smart Chart and consider if Instagram is the right platform to reach them. For example, if elderly community members are your target audience, Instagram might not be the right choice. However, if your general communications strategies benefit from strong visual components, Instagram is for you.

Instagram allows users to distill the power of images and pair them with captions to relay the most salient points of your organization's work. Instagram is an especially good platform to feature specific individuals or events because each post can be attached to a specific story.
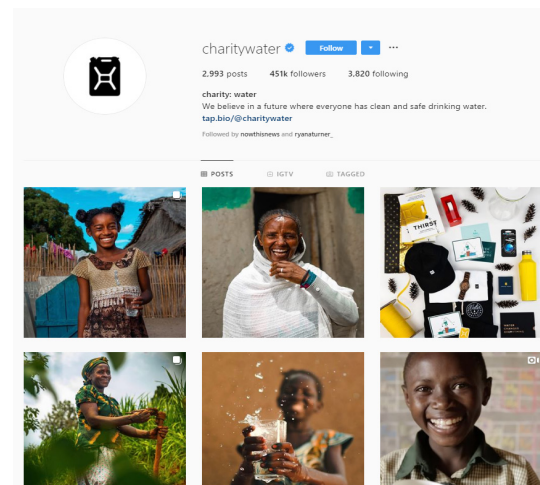
Who Uses Instagram?

Instagram is especially helpful for social movements built on youth and young adult advocacy. About 75 percent of users are between the ages of 18 and 24. Instagram is also popular among communities of color; 51 percent of Latinx and 40 percent of Black adults in the U.S. use the platform. Instagram is becoming increasingly popular. In a single year, nonprofits on Instagram grew their following by 101 percent, doubling their audiences.

Nonprofits have a strong presence on Instagram. Charity Water is making strides in the space by showcasing the faces of people benefitting from the organization's work. Followers are able to feel a personal connection with the people the organization is helping. Additionally, the platform is used to expand community engagement by measuring responses and interactions with posts.

How Does It Work?

Instagram allows you to upload photos directly to your profile. You have the option of uploading as many as 10 images in one post. You are also provided with the opportunity to edit your image on the application. To call your followers to action, you can put a link in your bio to the website that you would like followers to visit.

Build

After deciding that Instagram is the right platform to join and confirming that your staff has the capacity to manage a profile, there are a few logistical elements to think about before posting.

Instagram has the sneaky feature to reveal what organizations similar to yours have "liked." You can use this information to follow organizations or people who you think will support your cause.

A picture is worth a thousand words, but what makes a picture great? When deciding which photos are best for Instagram, here are a few tips:

Make it captivating. We know you're passionate about your issue. Instagram is a way to show versus tell others why your work is so important. Consider how your images look all together. Instagram accounts that have a consistent look and feel generally perform better.

Illustrate a need or opportunity within your work. Instagram offers an opening to show a close view of your work and your issue. Your Instagram content can show the importance of your issue.

Tell stories. Instagram is all about telling stories one image at a time. It can be a way to illustrate opportunity, portray hope and share inside moments.

Include a call-to-action. What do you want your followers to do next? Add an ask in the content of your post so that they can continue their support. You can't hyperlink an image in Instagram, but add the link of your organization into the "About You" section of your profile so followers know where they can find more information about your work.

📷 **Take a high-quality image.** The more <u>aesthetically-pleasing</u> the image, the more people will engage with the content.

👤 **Feature a real person.** Human-centric images, just like human-centric stories, resonate the most.
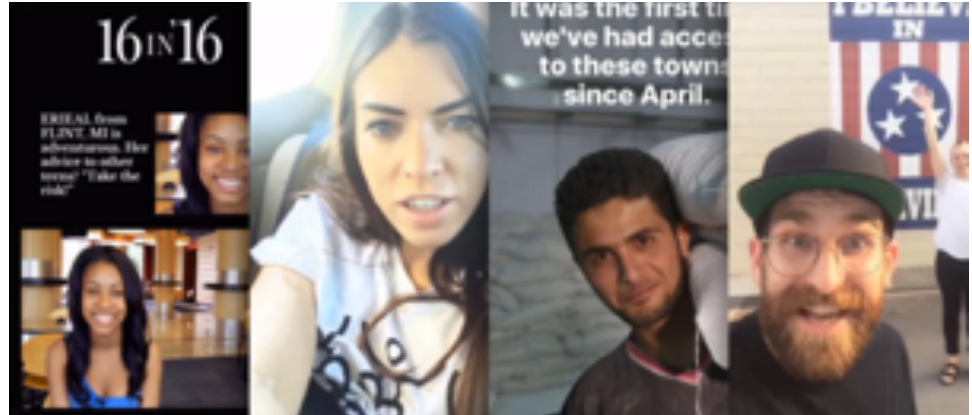
💬 **Communicate with others.** Instagram is interactive. Use your profile to support others in your space. Like posts, share hashtags and comment on relevant content to optimize your connection with users interested in your issue.

\# **Don't forget hashtags.** Users can find relevant content and posts to fit their interests based on hashtags. Using <u>relevant hashtags</u> can connect you to more users and help your post gain reach. Research found that interactions are highest on Instagram posts with 11 or more hashtags.

Stories

With the Stories function, you can share as much as you want throughout the day – with as much creativity as you want. You can bring your story to life in new ways with text and drawing tools. The photos and videos will disappear after 24 hours and won't appear on your profile grid or in feed. The immediacy of the story motivates users to look at your post right away before it's too late.

Snapchat is another visual social media platform that can be used to turn small moments into a shareable stories. Reference our <u>Snapchat</u> Digital S.M.A.R.T.S. page for more information.

Listen

It's easy to see how your posts are performing. Instagram tells you every time someone likes a post. Instagram provides basic data, such as who liked or commented on your post, how many people watched your videos and what other content your followers are engaging. But for more in-depth data, use one of the sites below for comprehensive analytic feedback.

<u>Iconosquare</u> allows you to measure growth, track your audience and analyze your engagement by providing both high-level and in-depth analytics.

<u>Sprout Social</u> offers sophisticated information such as demographics and psychographics about your audience and influencer identification.

<u>Union Metrics</u> provides data about who is interacting with your posts, what content is excelling and insights, such as when best to post during the day.