



A MARKETING  
**FIELD GUIDE**  
AND HANDBOOK

4  
RULES

FOR CRAFTING A COMPELLING  
INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT



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FOUNDATION

Where nonprofits soar.

Instagram is a powerful marketing vehicle for any nonprofit. The platform allows your organization to highlight the work that you're doing in dynamic and interesting ways, and can help you reach a broader audience of younger users. Post arresting visuals to capture what makes your nonprofit unique!

## **RULE 1**

### **EMPHASIZE VISUAL STORIES BY AVOIDING TEXT-HEAVY POSTS.**

First and foremost, Instagram is a place for sharing compelling visuals. Every post should showcase something that's aesthetically pleasing or interesting – you might even consider hiring a professional photographer for your next event to get some great shots to share. Event posters or infographics tend to look out of place on Instagram, which was built for pictures. Focus on sharing images, and leave text-based details to the caption.



## **RULE 2**

### **KEEP YOUR CAPTION SHORT AND PUNCHY.**

Instagram captions should be short and sweet – two sentences at the most! Overwhelming your audience with too much text is a waste, because most users will scroll right over it. Think of Instagram as a place to pique user interest, and drive them to your website or Facebook page for the complete story.

## RULE 3

### VARY YOUR POSTINGS.

Instagram is a great place to demonstrate the creativity of your nonprofit by building a repertoire of posts highlighting unique facets of your work. Don't just post the same type of visual over and over again; mix in the full range of your organization, from action shots to group photos. Need some ideas? Here are four types of posts to consider:



#### DESCRIPTIVE POSTS

Descriptive posts are the most common; they illustrate the everyday work that your organization does. Try highlighting an amazing staff member, or using a #TBT to remind your followers of a great event you hosted last year.

#### CALLS-TO-ACTION

Are you trying to fundraise for a particular event? Are you soliciting applications for a new program? Post to let others know about ways they can get involved.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT POSTS

These posts will let users know about an upcoming event or fundraising initiative. Don't just post an event poster, though! Limit the amount of text in your image, and get creative. Perhaps post an image of the venue where you will be hosting, or the wine you will be serving, and feel free to use a filter to make your pic Instagram ready.

#### QUIRKY POSTS

Looking to engage with more users? Start a caption contest of one of your funnier images, and invite users to share their ideas for what is going on in the photo. Instagram is a great place to post images that capture the lighter side of your organization.



## RULE 4 BE JUDICIOUS WITH YOUR #HASHTAGS.

Hashtags (#) are used to identify messages around a single topic, allowing terms to become searchable. Ideally, a trending hashtag will allow new potential supporters to find your organization and learn a bit more about the work you do. Keep your hashtags relevant and organization specific. Broad terms (e.g., #bayarea, #family) are used too frequently, and won't drive users to your content. Use hashtags sparingly so that they carry more weight—two or three hashtags is plenty!

Think of your Instagram account as a series of quick stories about your nonprofit, each capturing a new angle of impact. Don't worry about having all the details here—that's why you have a website and/or Facebook page. Instead, think of Instagram as a great way to spark interest with new potential supporters, and engage with current patrons in a more personal way. And most importantly, have fun!



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