



Social Media at Maxim

Using Hashtags on Instagram



Intro

As social media evolves, **hashtags** have emerged as a powerful tool for connecting with audiences, sharing content, and expanding your online presence. However, understanding how the hashtag algorithm works can be tricky.

This guide will give you insight and provide you with strategies to leverage hashtags to achieve your specific goals, whether it's increasing brand awareness or engaging with your target audience.

A photograph of medical professionals in a hospital setting, overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A male doctor in a white coat and glasses is looking at a female nurse in blue scrubs who is gesturing with her hand. Another nurse is visible in the foreground on the left, holding a clipboard.

Understanding the Hashtag Algorithm



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How many hashtags can you use?

Instagram allows you to use up to 30 unique hashtags per post. While there are no penalties for using all 30, it's recommended to use a minimum of 5-10 hashtags that are relevant to your content, personal brand, or industry. This will increase your chances of appearing in relevant searches and reaching a wider audience.

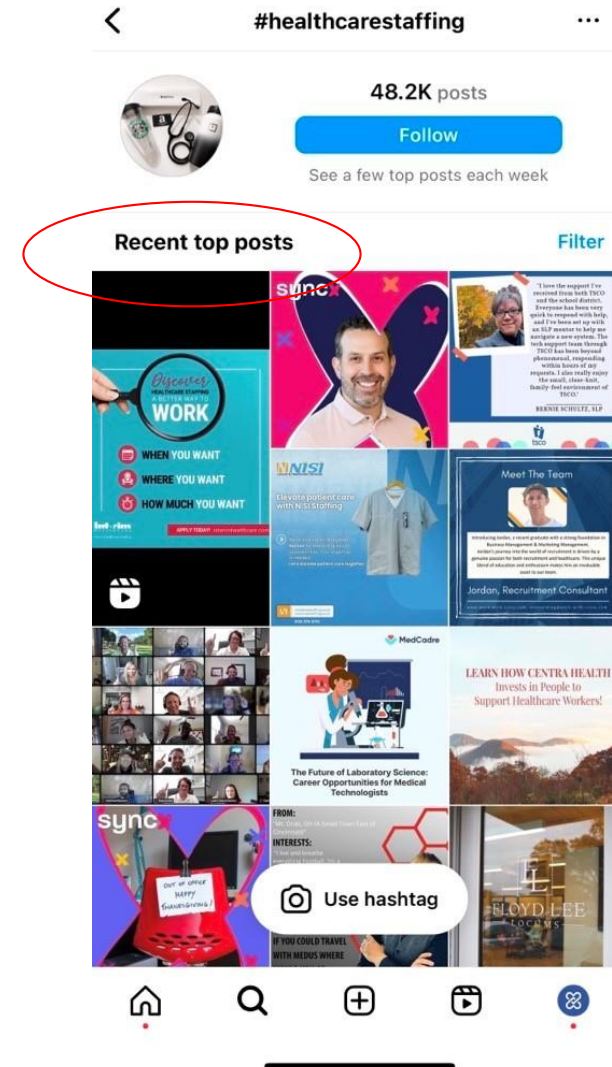
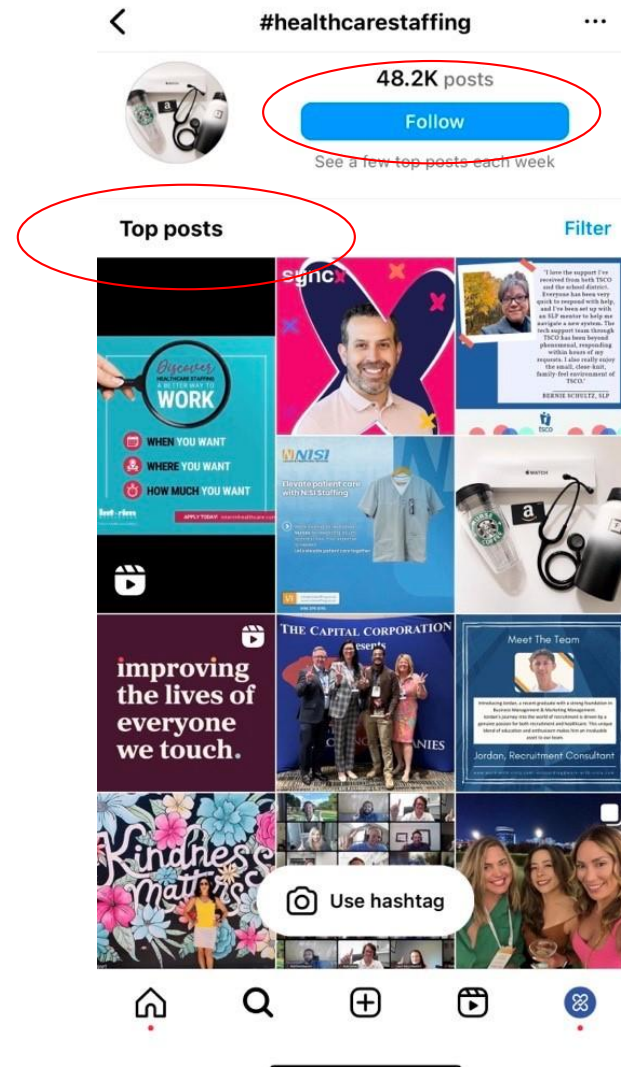
Where should you put the hashtags?

The placement of hashtags, whether in the caption or comments, doesn't affect their performance. However, for highly popular hashtags with over a million posts, adding them to the caption is recommended. This is because popular hashtags move quickly with new content constantly being added. Taking an extra 15-30 seconds to add hashtags to a comment can cause you to miss out on valuable visibility.

Understanding the Hashtag Algorithm

When searching a hashtag on Instagram, there are a few things you will notice on the search page.

- The number of posts that are associated with that hashtag
- Top posts
- Recent top posts



Top Posts vs. Recent Posts

The search results default to the “**Top Posts**” tab which is sorted based on your individual user experience.

Factors that determines how top posts content is sorted:

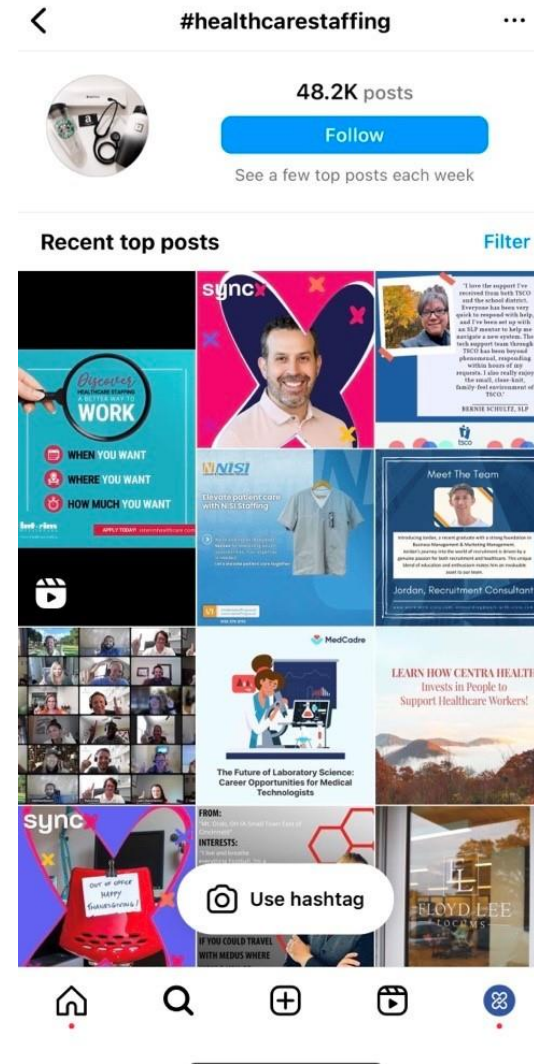
- **Content Preference:** The algorithm prioritizes content that aligns with your interests, based on your past interactions. If you frequently engage with nursing-related content, the algorithm will likely display more nursing content or content from nursing accounts in your search results.
- **Content Performance:** Instagram evaluates the performance of your content, with both followers and non-followers, to determine its ranking in search results. If your content sparks engagement from both parties, it's more likely to appear higher in search results than content that only engages your followers.
- **Content Relevance and Timing:** Posting on a hashtag that's trending with high volume and activity can make it difficult to stand out. On the other hand, posting on a hashtag with less competition can increase a post's likelihood of appearing higher in search feeds.

Top Posts vs. Recent Posts

Unlike the algorithmically sorted "Top Posts" tab, the "**Recent Posts**" tab presents content chronologically, with the most recent image appearing in the upper left corner.

This chronological order means that if you and another person opened the same hashtag at the same time, you would essentially see the same content in the same order.

However, most users tend to gravitate towards the "Top Posts" tab due to its default setting.



A photograph of three healthcare professionals in a clinical setting, overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A man in a white lab coat and glasses is on the left, a woman in blue scrubs is in the center, and another woman is partially visible on the right. They appear to be in a discussion, with the woman in the center holding a clipboard.

Choosing the Right Hashtags



Types of Hashtags

CUSTOM BRANDED

DISTINCT
HASHTAGS THAT
REPRESENT YOUR
CONTENT AND
PERSONAL BRAND

CONTENT RELATED

HASHTAGS
DIRECTLY RELATED
TO THE ITEMS OR
PLACES IN THE
ACTUAL POST
ITSELF

INDUSTRY RELATED

HASHTAGS
SPECIFIC TO THE
INDUSTRY YOU
SERVE OR WORK IN

TRENDING

TRENDY OR
THEMED-RELATED
HASHTAGS TO TAP
INTO CURRENT
TRENDS AND
POPULAR TOPICS

Creating a Branded Hashtag

It's recommended to establish a unique branded hashtag on Instagram. While using relevant hashtags to boost discoverability and growth is essential, a branded hashtag serves as a dedicated space for content related to you and your brand.

1. Start by brainstorming and identifying words or phrases that capture your essence and your areas of expertise. Incorporating your name, either in its complete form or as an acronym or shortened version is typically the easiest way to get your ideas flowing.
2. Next, consider incorporating taglines or phrases that are closely tied to your content and resonate with your audience. These could be phrases you frequently use in your content strategy or have become recognizable to your followers.
3. Be sure to conduct thorough research to ensure no one else is using your chosen hashtags. If there's minimal or no content associated with your preferred hashtag, go ahead and use it. However, if the hashtag is flooded with unrelated content, consider going for an alternative hashtag.

examples: #MaximStaffing #TheMaximWay #MaximOnSite



Targeting the Right Audience

Choosing the right hashtags can be a challenge for many users. While using generic hashtags or those directly related to your product or service might seem straightforward, they may not be effective in reaching your ideal target audience.

For ex: While hashtags like “#healthcarestaffing” seem logical for a staffing agency, they're unlikely to attract actual candidates. Job seekers actively searching for healthcare positions are more likely to use job boards and specialized platforms than browse generic hashtags.

In fact, the most prominent users of #healthcarestaffing might be other agencies – your competition, not potential employees.

Targeting the Right Audience

Focus on reaching your ideal candidate by understanding their online behavior and interests. By using targeted hashtags that resonate with their needs, aspirations, and online communities, you'll attract qualified candidates and unlock your recruitment goals.

Consider hashtags relevant to their online discussions and activities, such as:

SPECIFIC JOB ROLES

- #nurses
- #doctors
- #therapists

CAREER STAGES

- #newgrads
- #jobsearch
- #careerchange

LOCATIONS

- #travelnurse
- #nursesNYC
- #jobsinLA

SPECIALTIES

- #pediatricnurse
- #erjobs
- #oncologynurse



Recipe for Success



Hashtag Recipe for Success

Combine a well-rounded mix of hashtags, with various popularity levels, to attract the right audience and boost your engagements.

POPULAR HASHTAGS (4-5)

Hashtags with 500,000 to 1 million posts. Avoid hashtags exceeding 1 million, as they typically attract spam and meaningless engagement.

MODERATELY POPULAR HASHTAGS (5-6)

Hashtags with 50,000 to 500,000 posts. These offer a balance between reach and targeted engagement.

NICHE-SPECIFIC HASHTAGS (4-5)

Hashtags directly related to your service, solution, or your customer's problem. These can be geographically or industry-specific for precise targeting.

BRANDED HASHTAGS (1-3)

Include your own branded hashtags to build your identity and track content related to your brand.

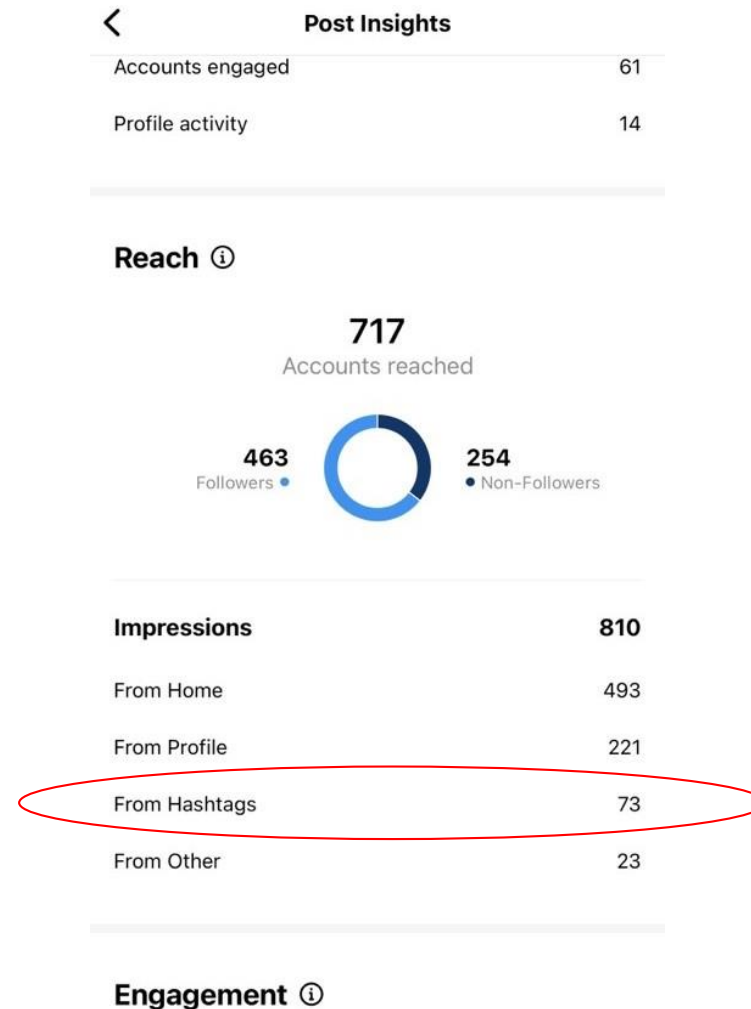
Hashtag Recipe for Success

- ➔ Popular hashtags give you an initial burst of likes and comments from non-followers shortly after posting. However, they quickly get buried in the feed, losing their effectiveness.
- ➔ Moderately popular hashtags keep your content discoverable to non-followers for hours or even days. This sustained engagement signals to Instagram that your content is valuable.
- ➔ As followers and non-followers engage with your post, Instagram recognizes it as high-performing content. This increases its visibility in the "Top" tab and for specific hashtags.
- ➔ Niche-specific hashtags position you at the top of the search results, potentially for weeks or even months, as your content outperforms others in that category.

Reviewing your Hashtag Recipe

If you have a Professional or Creator account, you can review the hashtag performance of any post by taking a look at the “post insights”. You can assess overall performance or discover which hashtag groups are most effective for your content.

- Analyze your post insights regularly to identify trends and optimize your hashtag strategy.
- Experiment with different hashtag combinations to find what resonates with your audience.
- Remember, multiple factors can influence post reach, not just hashtags.



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Attracting New Followers



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Remember we are using social media to build relationships and trust with our target audience. Instead of aggressively promoting yourself, actively engage with content your target audience creates in relevant hashtags.

- ➔ Regularly check your chosen hashtags and like the content you find valuable. This simple act gets you noticed without being intrusive.
- ➔ Many users in these hashtags have smaller audiences and appreciate engagement. Your like increases their visibility and encourages them to check out your profile.
- ➔ By engaging, your username appears in their notifications, prompting curiosity. They'll likely visit your profile to learn more about you and your content. (This is why building up your profile prior to engaging is important.)
- ➔ If your content resonates with them, they'll be more inclined to follow you. This organic connection is more sustainable than forced tactics.

Conclusion

Hashtags are your secret Instagram weapon! They boost engagement, grow your audience, and even drive sales. But the key is to be **strategic and consistent**. Build a custom hashtag recipe that works for you and your audience, both in feed posts and stories.

It takes time to find the perfect mix. Research, tweak, and experiment until your formula hits the spot. Do a quick audit every 3-6 months to refresh and refine.

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Good luck!

December, 2023

