



INSTAGRAM BUSINESS

VOICE & TONE GUIDELINES

Version 2 | November 2017

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VOICE

VOICE

The business voice is consistent with all [Instagram audiences](#): it’s helpful, but not overbearing; simple, but not condescending; empowering, but not pushy.

Everything we write should sound like Instagram.

Here’s how these apply to business writing:

Helpful: Our writing should be encouraging, educational and insightful. When writing for business, lead with the benefit whenever possible. Be sure readers are clear on the purpose of the content and why it matters to them.

Simple: Use casual, straightforward language over jargon. Do not confuse the reader by including too much information at once. Include only relevant and valuable content.

Empowering: Our writing should come across as confident—not authoritative or smug. What we write should be a reliable and quality source of information for our business community.

And keep in mind:

Always make our readers the hero, never our products. When possible, fill content with community stories and how they relate to the product you’re writing about.

Avoid marketing jargon whenever possible. Of course, this depends on whom you’re writing for. Limit use for internal groups or highly knowledgeable partners only.

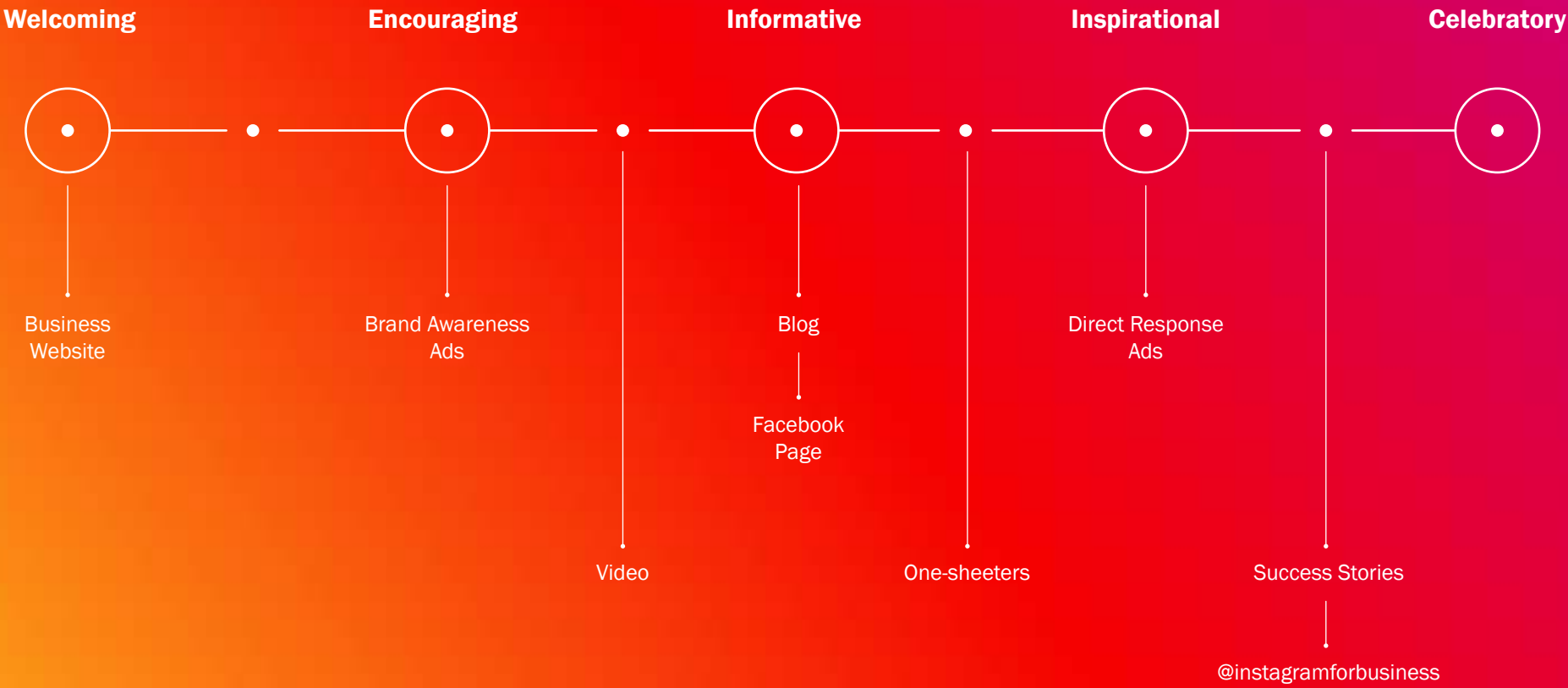
Instagram has a personality—it’s ok to use language that’s occasionally fun and reflects that. But never distract people by outrageous headlines or offbeat humor.

TONE

TONE

We write various types of content—from blogs to bylines. And while the same voice is carried throughout, each of our content types requires a distinct tone. Here’s the tone scale and how it breaks down for specific pieces of collateral.

TONE SCALE





BUSINESS WEBSITE

Your tone should be: Welcoming

Reader: The business community—marketing managers, SMBs, agencies, sales teams

Reader feelings: Curious about Instagram

Scripts or content should never be: be stale, include jargon

Write like this:
<https://business.instagram.com/getting-started/>

Tips

- Write with a much more imaginative or artistic tone on the site—including adjectives and descriptions that exemplify the current business narrative.



Why Instagram?

People come to Instagram to be inspired and discover things they care about, and that includes content from brands and businesses.

15 Million+

business profiles worldwide.¹

2 Million+

advertisers worldwide use Instagram to share their stories and drive business results.²

60%

of people say they discover new products on Instagram.³

75%

of Instagrammers take action after being inspired by a post.⁴

80% Increase

in time spent watching video on Instagram.⁵

1/3

of the most viewed stories are from businesses.⁶

Starting an account is quick and easy.

Set up an Instagram Business Account to give people more information about your products, service or business.

Step 1: Download and launch the app

Download the Instagram app for iOS from the [App Store](#), Android from [Google Play](#), or as Windows Phone from the [Windows Phone Store](#).



BRAND AWARENESS ADS

Your tone should be: Encouraging

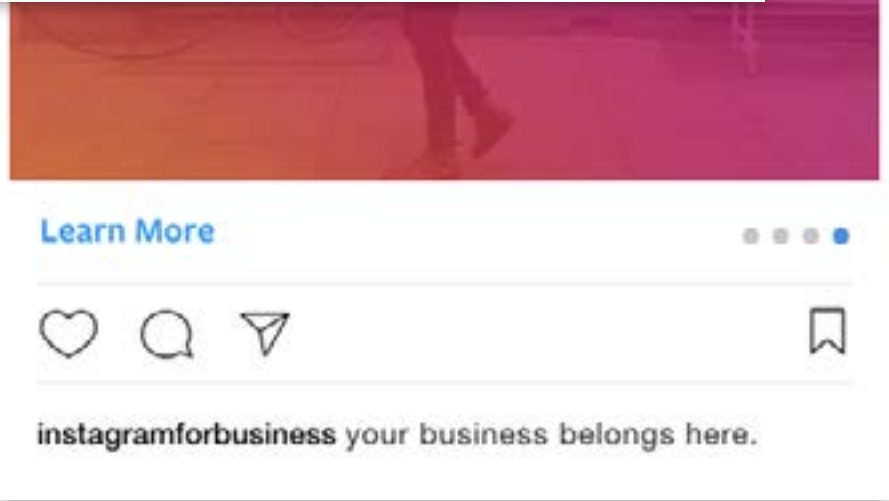
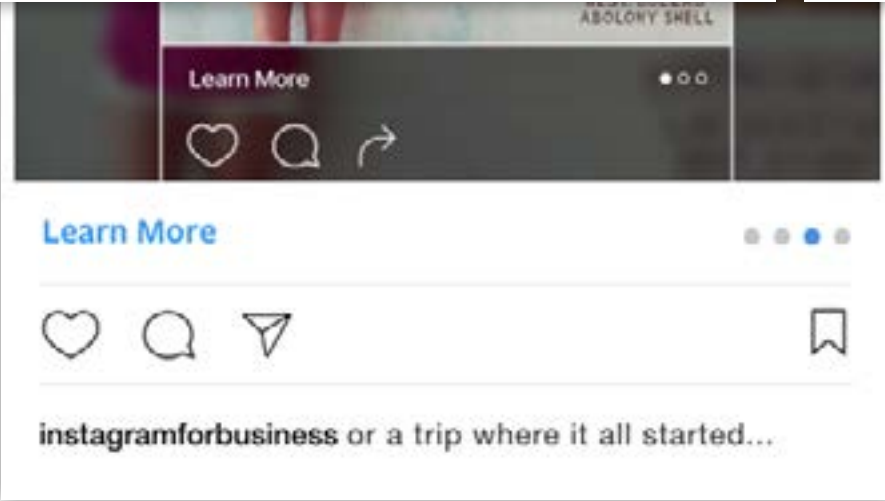
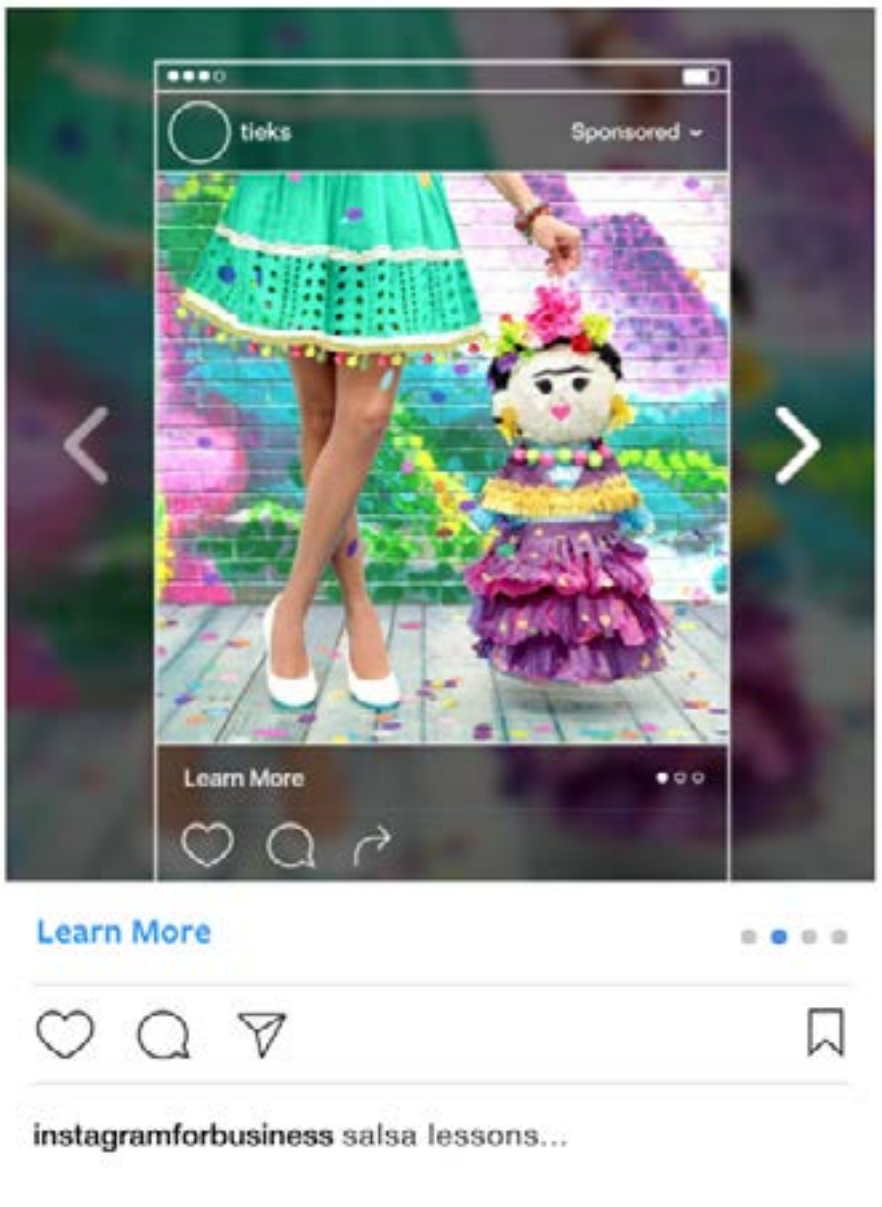
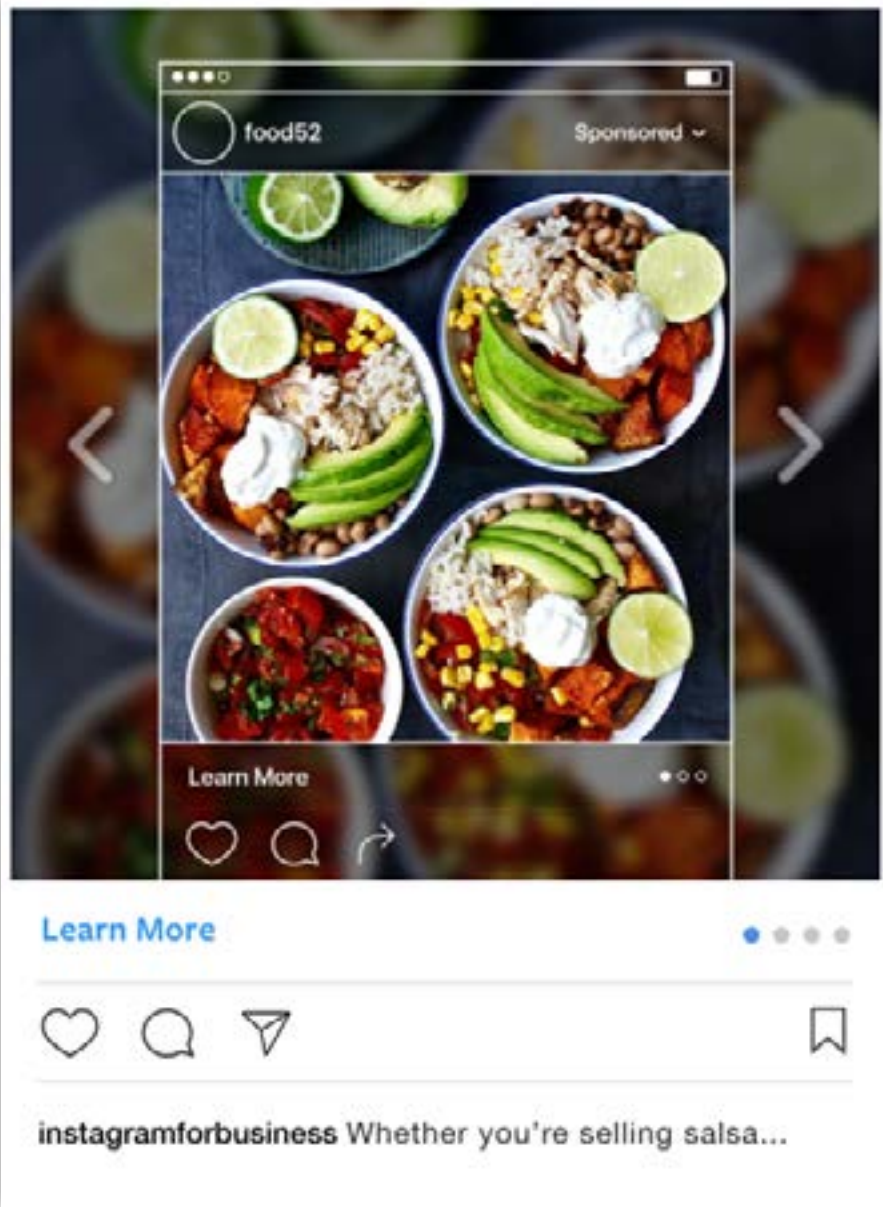
Reader: The business community—marketing managers, SMBs, agencies

Reader feelings: Exploring Instagram

Writing should never: include jargon, be overtly self-promoting

Write like this:
Example: Whether you’re selling salsa, salsa lessons, or a trip to where it all started, you belong on Instagram

- Tips**
- Creative should be king, but content needs to pack a solid backup punch. Write copy that complements the photo/video.
 - This is the channel where we can target people we want to speak to. Please know who your target audience is before writing and write accordingly.





VIDEOS

Your tone should be: Encouraging + Informative

Reader: The business community—marketing managers, SMBs, agencies

Reader feelings: Exploring and experimenting on Instagram

Scripts or content should never be: vague or include jargon

Write like this:
<https://vimeo.com/223320690>

Tips

- *If your videos don't have scripts, work with your production company to create a sequence outline and interview guide that complements that outline so you have an idea of what the story arc will be.*
- *For SMBs, videos featuring other SMBs resonates best with this audience*





BUSINESS BLOG

Your tone should be: Informative

Reader: The business community—marketing managers, SMBs, agencies, sales teams, PR and the press

Reader feelings: Experimenting on Instagram

Writing should never be: vague or include jargon

Write like this:
<https://business.instagram.com/blog/creating-a-business-profile-on-instagram/>

Blog content includes:

- *Announcements:* product changes and updates; company milestones and announcements
- *Success stories:* the deeper stories behind great results
- *Sales references:* content that proactively addresses pain points from our community. Solution/tips should always be seeded in a community story.
- *Spotlights:* stories from our business community around the globe. These could be examples of businesses doing interesting things on the platform—some of which may not be performance based.

Tips

- *Include links to other content that’s helpful and applicable to your story*
- *Good blogs are conversational and should have a personality. Don’t be afraid to include occasionally fun language.*
- *Titles should be engaging. Rather than presenting readers with a thing, we want them to feel like they’re coming along on an experience. In order to convey a sense of action in the title, we often start our post titles with gerunds (“-ing” words). Common go-to words if needed include “Exploring,” “Growing,” “Seeing,” “Capturing,” and “Reaching.”*
- *All blogs should include at least one example from a business using the platform*



14 JUL 22, 2018

Instagram Business Team
San Francisco, CA

Creating a Business Profile on Instagram

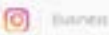
Last month, we announced new Instagram Business Tools to help companies better understand their followers and grow their businesses. The tools are currently rolling out gradually in the US, New Zealand and Australia, and will be available in all countries throughout the coming months.

With the new tools, companies of any size can be recognized with a business profile, get insights about followers and posts, and promote posts to drive business objectives—all within the Instagram mobile app. That means customers can see valuable information in your profile—like your business address or contact info. And you can get actionable information about which posts perform best, which days of the week and times are best to post and the demographic breakdown of your followers. You can also promote any posts you’ve shared, and include a button like Learn More, to reach new customers in your target audience.

Watch the video above to learn how to set up your business account, or read step-by-step instructions on [how to create a business profile](#), [how to use insights](#) and [how to promote your posts](#). You can also read more information about Instagram business tools at the [Advertiser Help Center](#) or take a [Blueprint learning course](#).

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Other services

[Facebook](#)
[Messenger](#)
[Audience Network](#)



FACEBOOK PAGE

Your tone should be: Informative

Reader: The business community—SMB-skewed

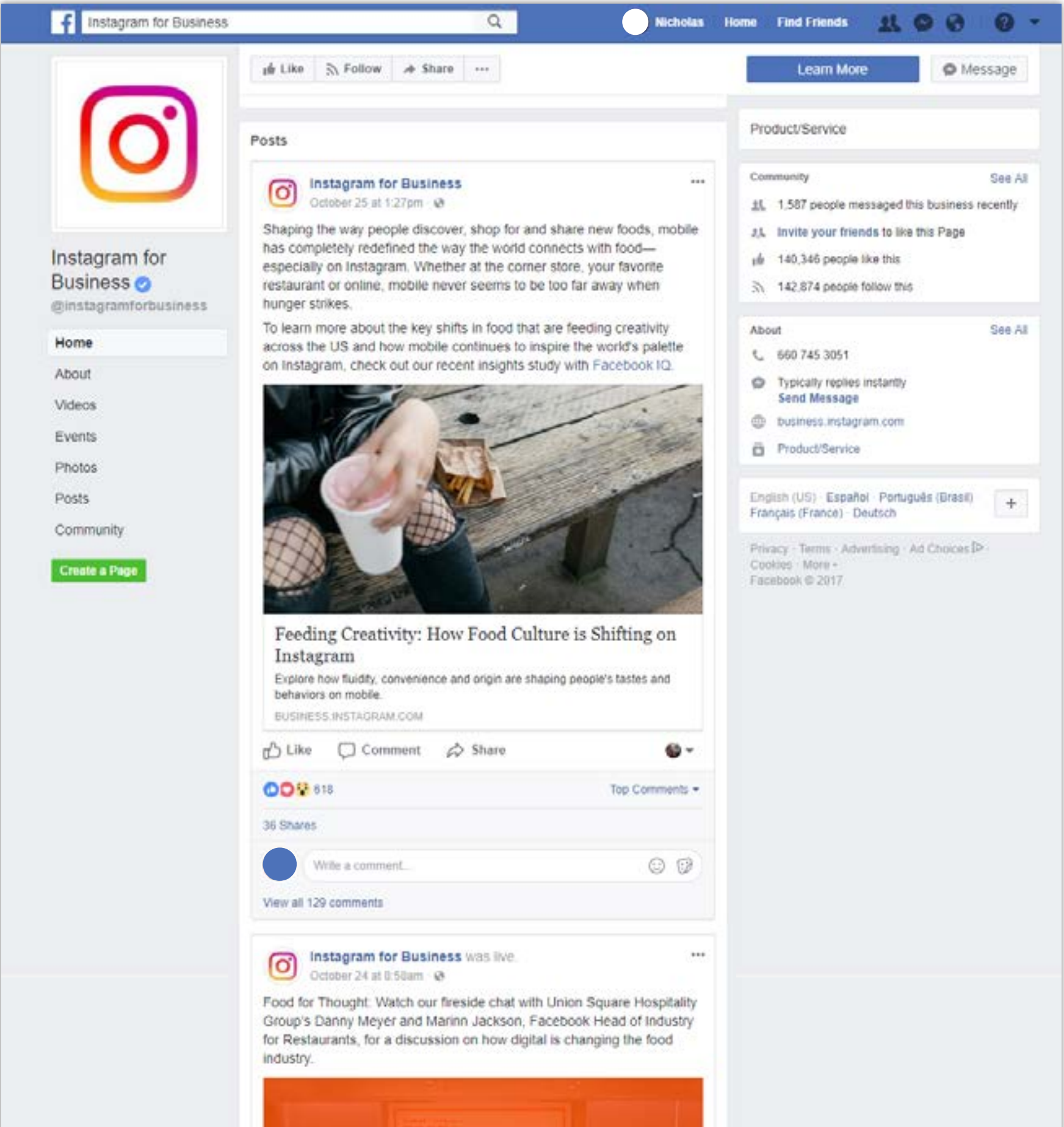
Reader feelings: Experimenting on Instagram

Writing should never be: vague or include jargon

Write like this:
https://www.facebook.com/instagramforbusiness/?ref=br_rs

Tips

- *Timely content and crossposts work best*





ONE-SHEETERS

Your tone should be: Informative + Inspirational

Reader: Clients via internal sales teams/internal teams

Reader feelings: Experimenting and proficient on Instagram

Writing should never: be vague or overtly self-promoting

Write like this:
Use Video Ads on Instagram to tell your business’ story where people seek visual inspiration. Our bold, mobile format autoplays by default and is more flexible than ever—now supporting landscape videos, calls-to-action and up to 30 seconds of content.

Tips

- *You can use industry speak here. The more transparent, straightforward and specific you can be, the better.*
- *Specify internal only for highly sensitive information*

COMPANY
MISSION STATEMENT

Instagram strengthens relationships
through shared experiences

VALUE PROPOSITION FOR BUSINESS

Where visual expression inspires visible action

CONNECT PASSIONS

People
People come to Instagram to find and share their passions.

Results
Businesses tap into the emotions that appeal to people’s passions, creating deeper relationships online and off.

IMMERSE VISUALLY

Creativity
Instagram provides people a memorable experience through visual storytelling.

Results
Instagram offers businesses unique creative tools and immersive formats that encourage action.

SPARK EXPLORATION

Mobile
People are inspired on Instagram to explore and create new connections.

Results
Instagram gives businesses real impact by connecting to new audiences and growing existing ones.



DIRECT RESPONSE ADS

Your tone should be: Inspirational

Reader: The business community—marketing managers, SMB owners, agencies

Reader feelings: Proficient on Instagram


Writing should never: include jargon, be overtly self-promoting

Write like this:
Example: See why passionate people become passionate customers on Instagram.

Tips

- *Creative should be king, but content needs to pack a solid backup punch. Write copy that complements the photo/video while eliciting some sort of action.*
- *This is the channel where we can target people we want to speak to. Please know who your target audience is before writing and adjust accordingly.*

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From waterfall portraits to iceberg murals, experience water in its intricate forms next week.



Visit Instagram's Water Exhibit at Cannes
Located at Hôtel Barrière le Majestic

 24

3 Comments

2 Shares

 Like


 Comment


 Share


[Learn More](#)





Instagram

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[Learn More](#) 



instagramforbusiness Step inside Instagram's Wander + Wonder at Cannes to explore the power of passions and the influences that drive them.



SUCCESS STORIES

Your tone should be: Inspirational + Celebratory

Reader: The business community—marketing managers, SMB owners, agencies, sales teams

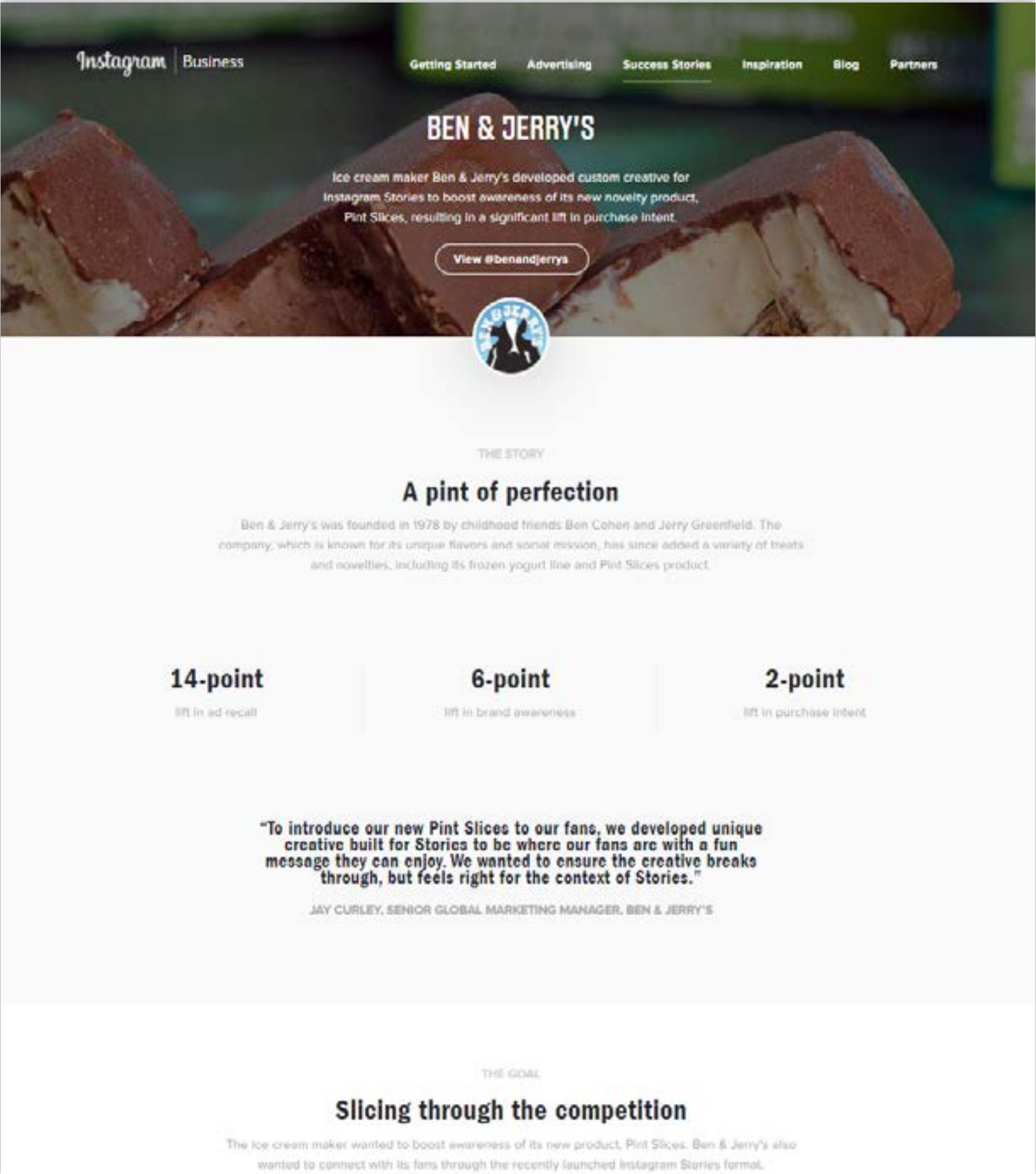
Reader feelings: Proficient and successful on Instagram

Writing should never: be overtly self-promoting, uninteresting or vague

Write like this:
<https://business.instagram.com/success/ben-and-jerrys/>

Tips

- Headlines should play off of both the brand featured and the product used. They should be fun, even quirky, but never over-the-top outrageous.
- The Solution section should give readers enough information to execute a similar campaign if they wanted
- Include vivid adjectives, but not in excess





@INSTAGRAMFORBUSINESS

Your tone should be: Inspirational + Celebratory

Reader: The business community—marketing managers, SMB owners, agencies

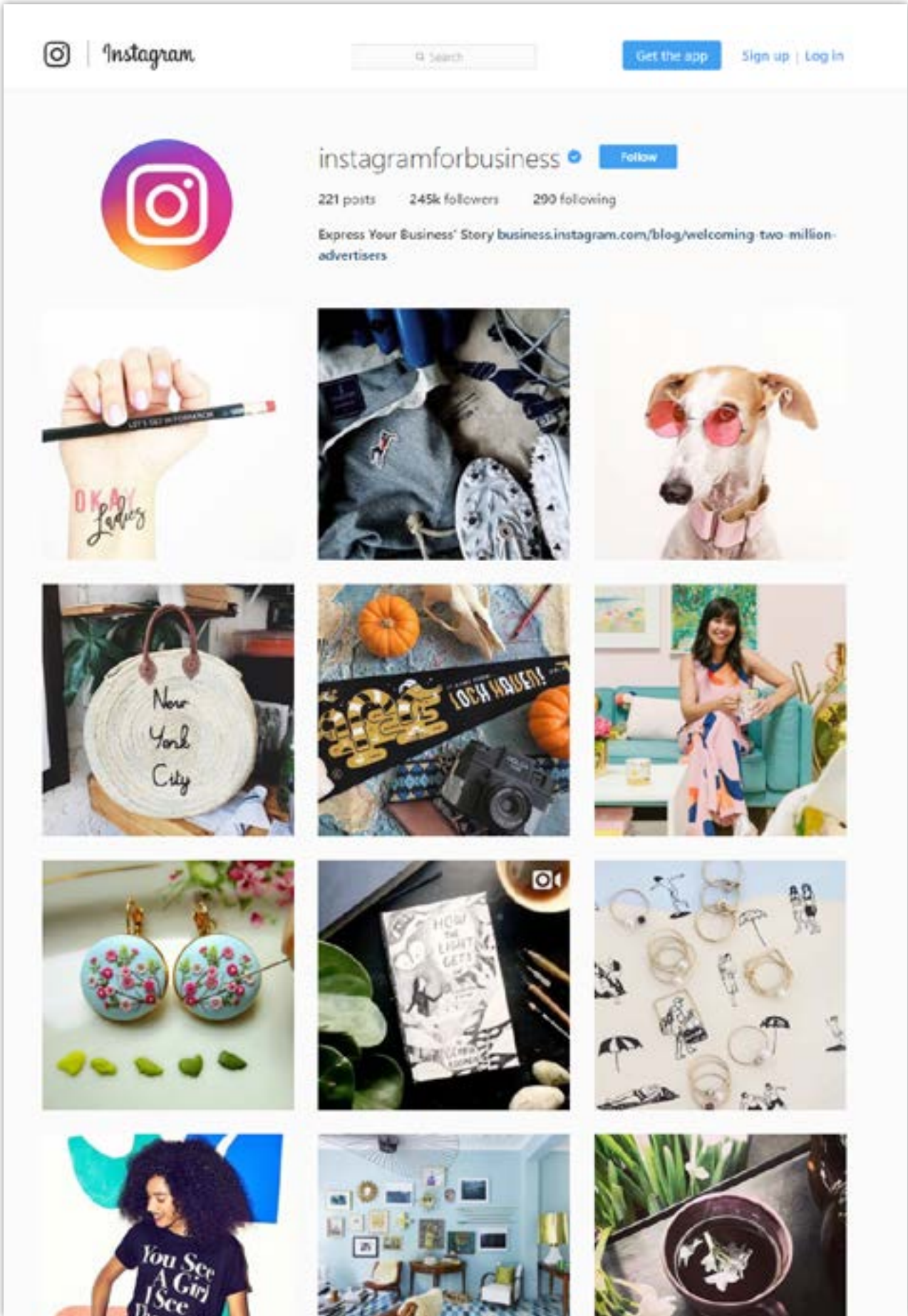
Reader feelings: Proficient and successful on Instagram

Writing should never: include jargon, be instructional or demanding

Write like this:
<https://instagram.com/instagramforbusiness/>

Tips

- *We write with a much more imaginative or artistic tone on the feed—including adjectives and descriptions that exemplify the narrative.*
- *Always use a client quote whenever possible.*
- *Text shouldn't be longer than 250 words, exceptions are allowed.*
 - End post with photo/video credit in this format:
 - Photo by @[username]
- *If content is done by someone other than the business, use this format: Photo by @[username] for @[business]*
- *Hashtag usage: OK to use to if they fit the story. Please keep to 3 max, and only use relevant and appropriate hashtags. (e.g. #makeportraits would be OK for a portrait series, while #mcm (man crush monday) may not be so appropriate.)*
- *Private account linkage: do not to link to private accounts within posts. If the person or business being quoted is set to private, please only include their name and not their handle.*



AUDIENCES

AUDIENCES

Brands/GSO

Brands on Instagram are savvy. Although we should avoid jargon whenever possible, you should write in marketing terms that resonate with big brands

Example: reach and frequency, return on ad spend, moment buys, mass awareness, target audience

SMBs

The SMB segment ranges from big brand names like Patagonia to corner mom and pop stores. Before you write for an SMB audience, first determine if they are the M in SMB, or the S in SMB.

- For the larger—or M—SMBs, speak to them the way you would a bigger brand
- For the smaller—or S—SMBs, you need to speak to them differently. In most cases, small businesses are not as marketing savvy as larger brands. You should avoid jargon at all costs. For many small businesses, even words like reach and frequency don’t resonate with them. Instead, use clearer wordage like “get more people seeing your ads multiple times”. Small businesses are busy growing a business and the last thing they need is content that’s hard to digest and discouraging.
- Example: reach and frequency = more people will see your ads multiple times; return on ad spend = better results for lower costs; moment buys = ads that run during a big moment for your business like an event; mass awareness = get your ad in front of a larger group of people; target audience = people most likely to be interested in your business)

And keep in mind:

Always make our readers the hero, never our products. When possible, fill content with community stories and how they relate to the product you’re writing about.

Avoid marketing jargon whenever possible. Of course, this depends on whom you’re writing for. Limit use for internal groups or highly knowledgeable partners only.

Instagram has a personality—it’s ok to use language that’s occasionally fun and reflects that. But never distract people by outrageous headlines or offbeat humor.

GRAMMAR/PUNCTUATION

GRAMMAR/PUNCTUATION

Oxford commas: do not use the oxford comma unless it’s absolutely required for clarity in a sentence

Semicolons: only use in complex lists where the items have necessary commas within their structure

Hyphens: used in compound adjectives and adverb-adjective constructions

En dashes: use en-dashes (option + hyphen) for numerical ranges such as dates or measures

Em dashes: use unspaced em-dashes (option + shift + hyphen) to add dramatic emphasis in a sentence. We also use them for high-emphasis appositive phrases (phrases inserted to provide more information).

Parenthesis: use parentheses around someone’s username in editorial text if it comes after their name—Daniel Krieger (@danielkrieger). We also use parentheses to set off low-emphasis appositive phrases (phrases inserted to provide more information).

Ellipses: avoid the use of ellipses in all text

Exclamation points: avoid the use of exclamation points in everyday text

Periods: In a bulleted or numbered list, only include periods in lines that have more than one sentence. All single-sentenced lines should go without them.

Numbers: spell out all numbers zero to nine, anything above 10 should be written in numerals

Dates: represent times using AM and PM conventions, rather than in 24-hour (“military time”) format. Dates are written in the format month-date-year. Write out date ranges within the same month as two numerals separated by a hyphen.

Quotations: It’s ok to edit client quotations with these rules. Always make sure changes are approved by quoter.

- We do not use [sic] to indicate an error within the quotation
- We do correct all typos in quotations received via text-based media (email, Direct, etc.)
- We do make minor corrections to grammar when we can without changing the user’s voice
- We do change all punctuation to match our style
- You may omit parts of quotation as long as it does not alter the original meaning
- When omitting, we do not use “...” or “[...]”. We instead use a transition (eg. “he explains,” “she says,” “they ask”)

Abbreviations:

• **Units of time**

- Century – 21st (use regular text, not superscript)
- Decades – 80s (no apostrophe)
- Months – Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec (no periods)
- Dates – Jan 9 or Feb 1 (not Jan 9th or Feb 1st)
- Days – Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat, or Su, M, Tu, W, Th, F, Sa if space is really tight (no periods)
- am, pm (example: 1am, 2:30pm)

• **In post timestamps**

- Minutes – m (example: 34m)
- Hours – h (example: 1h)
- Days – d (example: 4d)
- Weeks - w (example: 12w)

• **Other common usages**

- Examples – Use Ex: or ex: instead of latin abbreviations like e.g. or i.e.
- Etc. and Misc. – Always include a period with etc. or misc. Don’t use etc. to cover lack of examples. If not enough examples exist, re-consider if the content is necessary. When needed and where possible, spell out “and so on” or use an alternate word.
- Info (no period) – Spell out “information” on first use unless space is very limited
- Instagram – Don’t abbreviate Instagram
- US - Never USA, U.S.A. or U.S.

COMMON INSTAGRAM WORDS

COMMON INSTAGRAM WORDS

Instagram Stories: ephemeral feature of the mobile app that lets you share all the moments of your day, not just the ones you want to keep on your profile

- *Capitalization:* Only capitalize when paired with Instagram. Otherwise lowercase story and stories in all other instances (ie. Instagram Stories/Story vs. stories/story on Instagram)
- *The format:* story, stories
- *The action:* add to your story, share to your story
- *Photos & videos in a story:* parts of a story, part of a story
- *The row of faces at the top of feed:* bar at the top of feed
- *The thing around your profile photo indicating an active story:* colorful ring
- *Audience controls:* Hide story from [username]
- *Audience / impressions:* Seen by, people who saw your story (not viewers, views)
- *What happens to photos & videos after 24 hours:* Disappear (not delete)

Instagram Business Tools: collection of different products that provide businesses with a way to connect with customers on Instagram

- Business features include: Business Profile, Instagram Insights, Promote

Instagram Business: collection of different products from a new business profile to a way to create ads within the Instagtam app, that provide businesses with a way to connect with customers on Instagram. used by different business types

business’: the posessive form of business (not business’s)

video ad: video ad unit

photo ad: photo ad unit

carousel ad: ad unit featuring multiple photos in a single unit

mobile app install ad: ad unit that drives app downloads and links to an app store

link ad: ad unit that clicks offsite to a webpage of the advertisers choice

reach and frequency: ad buying type that guarantees that an advertiser will reach an established number of people within a target audience at a specified frequency at a fixed price.

post engagement: ad objective

website conversions: ad objective

Instagram Partners: vetted, proven experts that help advertisers drive success on Instagram

Custom Audiences (always capitalized): audience of current customers based on data pulled from a business’ email address or phone number list

lookalike audience: audience based on similar qualities as a business’ current audience, visitors to their site or their Facebook Page fans

Facebook pixel: snippet of code used to track when a person has landed or converted on a s pecific web page

Website Custom Audiences (always capitalized): audience based on people who have visited a business’ website

COMMON INSTAGRAM WORDS

Ads Manager: interface where you can view, make changes and access performance reports for all your campaigns, ad sets and ads

Power Editor: tool designed for larger Facebook advertisers who need to create lots of ads at once and have precise control of their campaigns.

Marketing API: application programming interface that allows people to create and manage ads on Facebook programmatically

IO: insertion order, a way for managed brands to buy advertising through their client partner

community: the way we refer to a business’ following on Instagram

WDHP: weekday hashtag project

impressions: the number of times an ad is viewed

return on ad spend (ROAS): industry-standard term that describes a metric that measures the effectiveness of online marketing campaigns

feed: refers to the stream of posts shared by people you follow

Instagram Direct: photo-messaging feature that lets you send photos and videos directly to one or a few people

like: describes tapping the <3 on a post

post: used to describe any kind of media on Instagram (photos, videos, comments)

share: used to describe posting a photo or video on Instagram

follow: used to describe subscribing to someone’s photos and videos so they appear in your feed

account: refers to your account as a whole, including your profile

profile: refers to the posts you’ve shared, as well as your personal information, including your profile photo, bio, password, gender, email address and phone number

log in, log into: always two words when used as a verb

login: noun, refers to the credentials that let you access your account

WORDS TO AVOID

AVOID	USE INSTEAD
\$1M or \$1K	spell out millions or thousands vs. using the abbreviation. This is especially important when copy is being translated into other languages as the abbreviation doesn’t always translate.
8x	capitalize X when referring to the times amount (ie. saw 2X increase in conversion rate)
Instagramer	Instagrammer (with two “m”s). Can be used to replace “people” but not “accounts.” Avoid this term for copy outside of North America.
people	When writing stats about app usage, only use the term “accounts.”If the stat is pulled from internal data, use “accounts.” If the stats are based on feedback from actual people, use “people.” (ie. 800 million Instagram accounts ≠ 800 million people on Instagram)
fans	followers
friends	people, followers, accounts, or profiles
pictures	photos
pages	profile or feed (unless talking about Facebook Pages)
users	people, followers, accounts, profiles or Instagrammers
Millenials	millennials (two ‘n’s and lowercased unless start of sentence or in title)
e-mail	email (no dash)
Internet	internet (lowercase unless the start of sentence or title)
third-party data	partner data (whenever possible)

