

Instagram:

how to build a
following for the arts

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Instagram: tell me more

Instagram enables brands to build and engage communities for striking visual content and video. Primarily as a smartphone app, Instagram allows you to enhance images using creative filters, share your content to other social networks and link with other popular apps (e.g. Flickr) to give your image library the biggest possible audience. By adding descriptions, tags and hashtags, Instagram provides numerous ways to tap into their global user base.

// Instagram is the newest part of our social media mix and has quickly become our most effective form of visual storytelling. It allows us to keep our audience engaged and up-to-date by highlighting the varied artists and programs in our season as well as featuring the iconic architecture of our three halls. //

Naomi Grabel, Director, Marketing & Creative Services
Carnegie Hall, US



Shot by Matt Scutt at Velo, this photograph was taken at sunset and drove a 25% up lift in Hever Castle Instagram followers over night, and a further 50% uplift within a week.

Should you include Instagram in your marketing plan?

It can be hard to keep up with the demands and developments in social media. Here's why you should be building Instagram into your social media workload.

flickr

90 million



Instagram
400 million

Instagram gives you access to a global audience searching for stimulating, shareable visual content. Compared to other services such as Flickr (90 million), Instagram leads the way with its 400 million active monthly users. Source: <https://www.flickr.com/jobs/>, <https://en-gb.facebook.com/business/products/ads/instagram-ads>

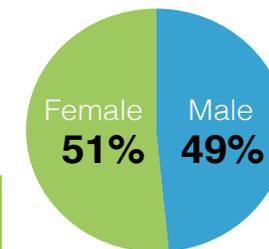
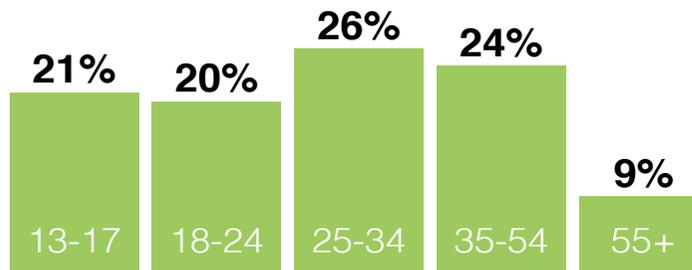
// Instagram connects us to our audiences in a unique way, allowing us to learn more about their experiences of the Barbican that we don't always get to experience ourselves. It's this range of views, and the social impact of these, that makes Instagram so appealing. It helps us imagine personalities for our bookers who otherwise might just be numbers and emails on a database!" //

Rachel Williams, Digital Marketing Executive
Barbican Centre, UK

Research from eMarketer suggests that Instagram users are more likely to engage with branded content than any other major social networking platforms.

58x
compared to
facebook

120x
compared to
twitter



Gender distribution

Instagram allows you to reach an even spread of users across age and gender

Who's using Instagram in the arts?

Our research shows that arts organisations across the globe are making a big impact on Instagram. Here's a quick run down of the ones to watch.

Organisation	Location	Followers	Posts
MOMA: The Museum of Modern Art	US	1.5m	1,742
Tate	UK	775k	829
Victoria and Albert Museum	UK	270k	976
Barbican Centre	UK	131k	495
Classic FM	UK	51.1k	1,158
Sydney Opera House	Australia	42.3k	1,115
Juilliard School	US	33.2k	477
Carnegie Hall	US	30.8k	543
Deutsche Grammophon	Germany	26.3k	556
Chicago Symphony Orchestra	US	24.4k	564
Southbank Centre	UK	21.2k	488
National Theatre	UK	14.2k	274

*numbers correct as of 16th May 2016

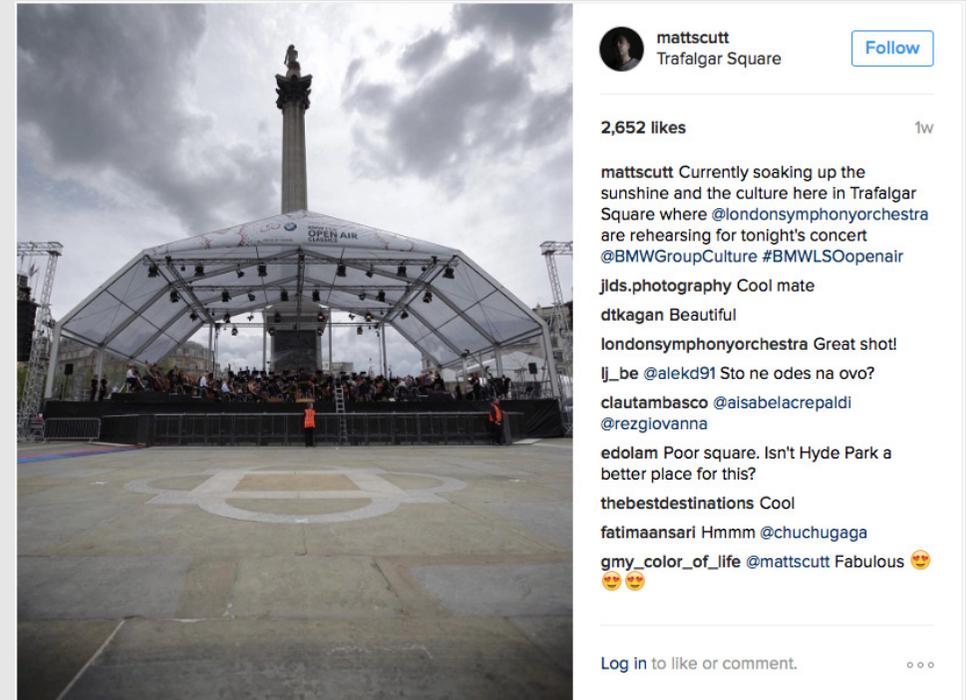


How do you get started and build a community?

So you've decided to give Instagram a try.

Here's our top tips to building an engaged following:

1. Think creatively about the unique assets and experiences you can access and share
2. Prioritise rich, visually stimulating and good quality content with a mixture of photos, video and designed advertising
3. Post regularly, ideally daily, and create an enthusiastic Instagram personality
4. Be aware of how your profile looks. Vary light, dark and colours so that it looks visually enticing
5. Create a relevant hashtag for your identity and engage with local influencers to build a rapport
6. Reply to comments and users' questions
7. Build a following through exclusive opportunities and competitions
8. Use tools such as 'Iconosquare' to find out when is best to post for your network and subject matter
9. Build up a bank of photos to post over time. Use services like Hootsuite to schedule in advance
10. Repost other users' content, but always ask permission and remember to mention their @name and tag in the post!



One of the best ways of building an audience on Instagram is by inviting popular instagrammers to visit your attraction, and giving them access to some of the lesser known areas such as behind the scenes. In May 2016, Velo were asked to support the LSO on their Instagram strategy this way at their BMW Open Air concerts. One of the most engaging posts we were able to shoot was this one attracting over 2,500 likes within a week.

Those photographers with large followers on Instagram often act as ambassadors and are able to introduce and connect you with others instagrammers with sizeable followings. **Matt Scutt, Creative Director, Velo**

About the authors



Mark Lewis

Mark Lewis is a marketing consultant with extensive experience in strategic marketing for nonprofits and commercial companies across the media and creative industries, most recently building Sinfini Music into the no.1 digital-only classical music brand for Universal Music Group.

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Matt Scutt

Matt is Creative Director of Velo, a London based digital communications agency and is one of the most influential instagrammers in London and the UK with over 300,000 followers. His expertise and personal connections has seen Velo plan and execute winning Instagram campaigns for Velo clients London Symphony Orchestra and Hever Castle resulting in high engagement, follower growth and beautiful content.

<http://www.velomarketing.co.uk/>