



GROW your Instagram Following

Read on to discover the strategy we've implemented to **ORGANICALLY** grow our Instagram profile [@hidden_edinburgh](#) and nurture a loyal following of highly engaged fans.

Project Background

Hi! We are ITY Marketing, an Edinburgh based social media and search agency specialising within the travel and hospitality sector.

We embarked upon a social media project called **Hidden Edinburgh** as a way to experiment with different approaches to grow and nurture an engaged audience in a niche geo-based sector. The results have been amazing and we want to share what we have learned with you - **for free!**

Take a look for yourself:

https://www.instagram.com/hidden_edinburgh/

<https://www.facebook.com/hiddenedinburgh>

If you want to connect with us, need support or have any questions please contact **us here**

Contents

This e-book should help anyone who is trying to grow their Instagram profile within a localised space.

- Why is Instagram important
- Content Discovery
- Hashtags
- Posting Content

Why Instagram?

The numbers speak for themselves; there are over **600 million** monthly users on Instagram with **400 million daily** users and **150 million daily** users of Instagram Stories, That's a lot of people!

Unlike Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter, Instagram is all about content discovery - this means your product/brand can be presented to hundreds of thousands of people, **for free**, which is very hard to achieve on all the other social channels.

Content Discovery

The reason Instagram is so good for your business is that there are so many ‘content discovery’ opportunities available.

1. Appear Highly for Important and Relevant Hashtags

Every hashtag search displays a ‘nine box’ which sits at the top of the results. Below the ‘nine box’ the most recent images for a hashtag are displayed.

Images stay in the ‘nine box’ for a while so if your image is displayed there you will generate much greater levels of visibility, higher engagement and more fans for your page.

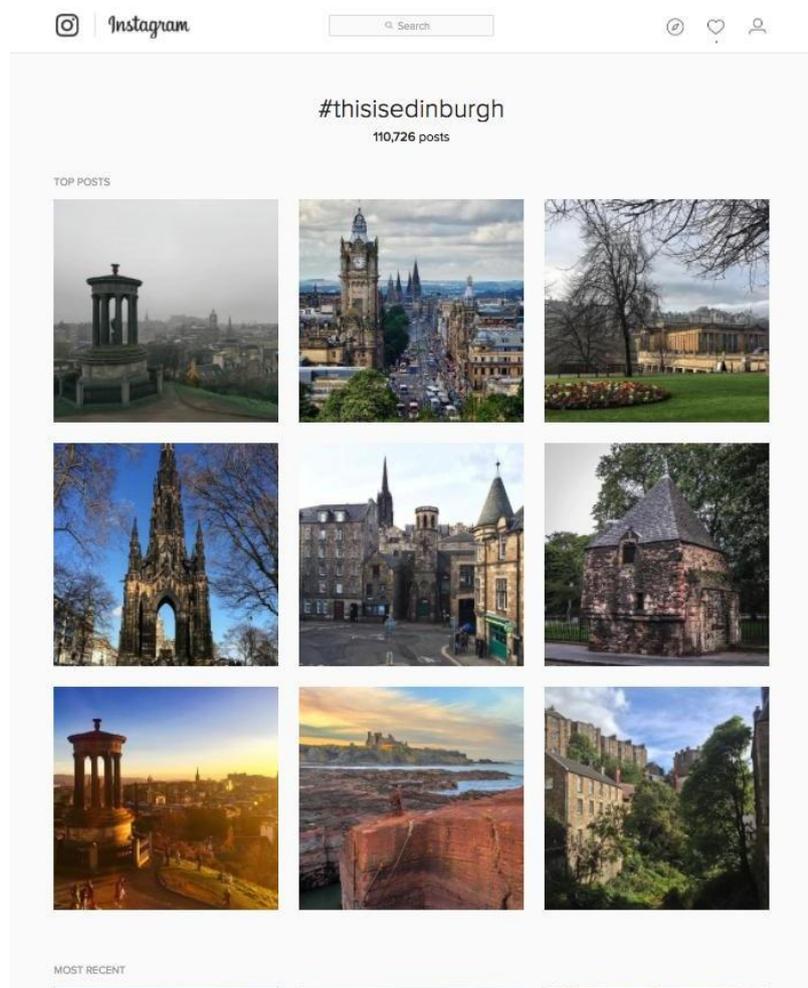


Image: The ‘nine box’

2. Suggested Box

The second opportunity is appearing in the 'suggested' box. This is shown when someone likes a page and Instagram suggests other related pages.

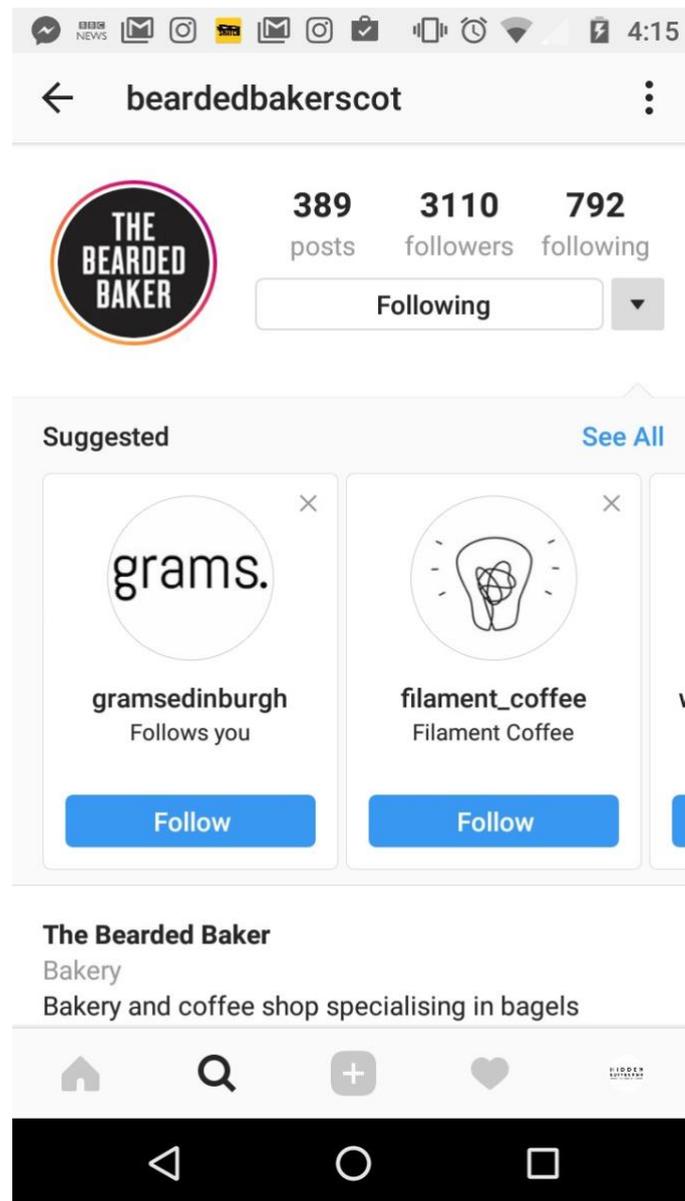


Image: The Suggested Box

3. Follower Activity

Within the follower section you can see what other people you follow are doing. This means if you can get **larger** Instagram profiles to engage with your content you have the ability to be seen by their fans too within their activity section.

4. Discovery Section

The big daddy of content discovery is the Discovery section. This area of the app suggests content you might be interested in, if you can appear in this section - you will hit the jackpot and drive lots of awareness and engagement for your page.

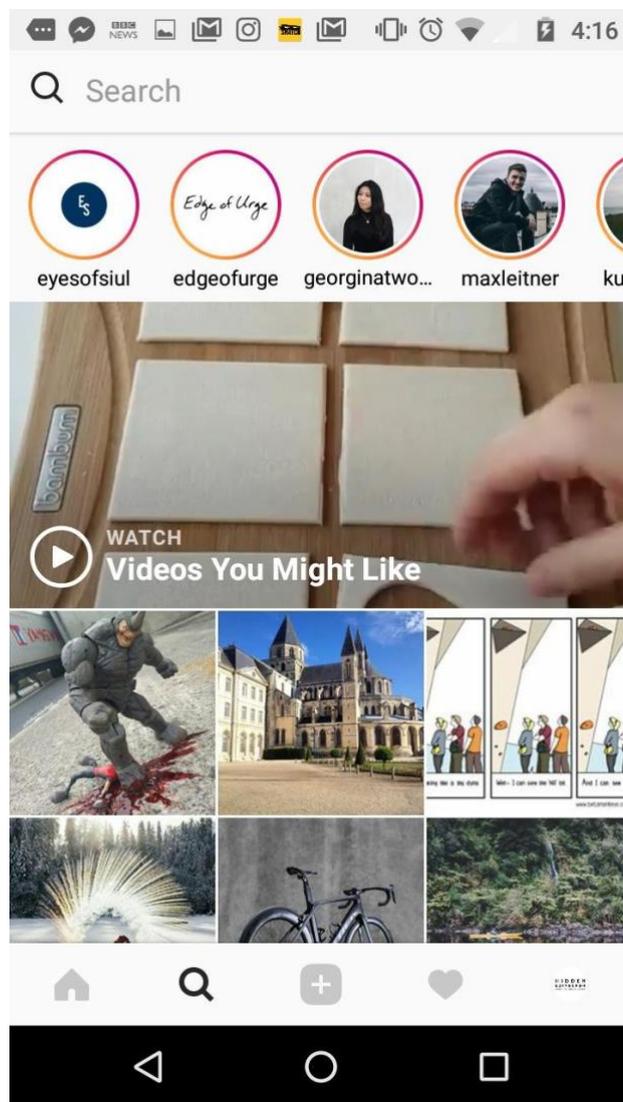


Image: The Discovery section

Hashtags

Content – good content - is what keeps people interested in your page. However, the use of relevant hashtags are how people discover you and how Instagram learns what your content is about. Using the right hashtags for your profile is the **single best** way of getting your content noticed!

When you use a hashtag you are labeling your image into a ‘category’ and then within that category you are competing against the other pages that also use this hashtag.

You can use up to **30 hashtags** in a post and we recommend you use all 30 in post to maximise visibility.

Post your hashtags in the first comment of a posting not in the caption text area, it keeps things clean and tidy and you can delete them at a later date if you wish to do so. Hashtags are picked up in the first comment and caption area so they have the exact same impact as being noted in the caption area.

1. Hashtag Research

Most people think that using the most common hashtags is the best way to gain exposure - “using popular hashtags means more people will see me?” Wrong!

Unless you are a massive page, using the most popular hashtags will have zero impact on your visibility because you are competing against 100s of millions of other postings so it is highly unlikely your content will be seen.

We recommend you build up a list of hashtags that are relevant to your profile/location. The best place to start is the tag search on the Instagram app. Put in a generic hashtag that matches your profile topic and it will display other suggestions, build up a list of relevant hashtags you can use across a range of posts. If you are posting more than once a day - have different groups of hashtags. The result will be a collection of 30+ hashtags you can easily and quickly refer back to.

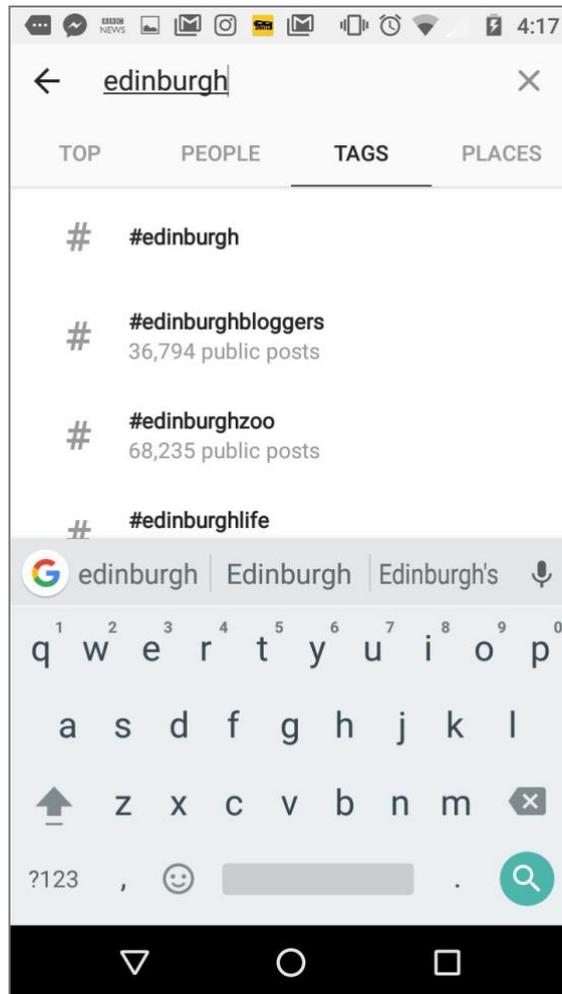


Image: Hashtag research

2. Hashtag Analysis

What is important in hashtag research is looking at each hashtag and the number of times it is used along with the engagement on each individual hashtag.

Look for hashtags with a few thousand up to hundreds of thousands of uses and incorporate a mix for your own posts.

Disregard hashtags with very low use as they will not help with visibility.

Forget about spammy 'likeforlike' 'followforfollow' hashtags they add no value and attract the wrong type of visibility. Remember we are looking for people who are truly interested in your content.

Finally keep your hashtag list as a note on your phone, this makes it easy to copy and paste into a comment once you have published the Instagram posting.

Content and Posting

People are on Instagram because they want to see beautiful and unique images. There is a lot of content out there so you need to ensure you stand out from the crowd!

Make sure your content is:

- Clean and sharp
- Blurry or low resolution images will not attract attention
- Consistent in style and theme. If your profile is about food keep your images about food - don't go off topic as your followers will get confused.

1. Image Type: Square, Rectangle or Album

Instagram allows you to post different image sizes and formats now. From our experience we still find square images perform the best, in terms of engagement levels, followed by portrait images (which fit nicely on a phone) and lastly landscape.

Instagram allows you to post multiple images into an album which are great for telling people a story HOWEVER we have found their engagement levels to be comparatively lower than a single square image. If you are looking for maximum engagement stick with a square or portrait image.

Get in Touch

We hope you have found this e-book useful. Our goal is to help people achieve success with their business online. If you implement the strategy that we've outlined above we're confident you will see results on Instagram.

If you want to connect with us, need support or have any questions about digital marketing get in touch with **us here**.