

Instagram



For Real Estate Agents





Instagram is one of THE biggest social media platforms in the world, boasting over 700 million active users. With the highly visual nature of this social media platform, it becomes the perfect way to showcase your listings and act as both a portfolio and a lead generator, increasing your engagement. And the best part? It's very user-friendly, so you can look like a pro, even if you have zero experience!

Why Every Real Estate Agent Should Be Using Instagram

Instagram is a visual platform, which makes it the perfect place to post pictures of your new listings and showcase your open houses. An added bonus is that those pictures remain on your profile, becoming a portfolio of past listings for potential leads to view.

Plus, you can see *exactly* who likes your post, which means you can reach out and contact these leads directly, as well as stay in touch with your existing clients.

Instagram becomes a form of free advertising for your new listings (not to mention you don't have to compete with Trulia, Zillow, or realtor.com), but also for promoting your open houses, which you can do with images and short videos. Hashtags are Instagram's SEOs, so you can get your posts in front of your target audience.

You may already have a personal Instagram account, but I would strongly recommend having a separate one for your real estate business. This is meant to be a reflection of you as a professional, so it's best to keep your personal posts separate.

Pro Tip: Facebook and Instagram share a platform, so if you already have a Facebook page set up, you can use the same email to set up IG and then link the two accounts together.

Choosing a Name

Choosing your name is key to your Instagram success. Not only should you include your name, but also use a keyword from your business to help users find you more easily. But, keep it short. The last thing you want is for people to have trouble finding you because your name is overly complicated or long.

It could be something like “JaneDoeRealEstate” or “janedoe.detroitrealty”. You don't want it too long, but either use your name or your business name or a combination of the two.

When setting up your Instagram account, you can select one of two options: to make it a personal or a business account. It isn't a necessity to make it a business account, but doing so will open up your account to “Insights” that will be tremendously helpful when understanding the demographics of the people engaging with your posts and looking at your account.

Adding a Photo

Your headshot is the only photo you will have on your profile, and for consistency, I would suggest using the same picture that you use on other social media sites as a headshot. This will let any potential clients searching recognize you across multiple platforms.

Write Your Bio

Unfortunately, the Instagram bio section is small, so you need to use it wisely and pack a punch!

So what should you include in your blurb?

- How you love to help people buy/sell homes (include your target audience)
- What niche you are in (luxury homes, mountain cabins, rental properties)
- Your location and neighborhood
- Your contact information

Add Your Website

This is the place where you would like your personal website. Instagram only allows you to link one website, and will not permit links or any urls within the body of your posts.



Set goals

The key to making your Instagram account work for you is to understand what you are trying to accomplish with your posts. Are you looking to attract new leads? Are you wanting to use it as an online portfolio of your listings?

Determining your goals will help you understand what kind of leads you are hoping to find:

- Local homeowners looking to sell or rent out their properties?
- Potential clients who want to buy or sell listings in your area?
- Former clients who are looking to refer you to their friends and family?
- Real estate agents from other locations who are looking for a referral agent in your area?

When you know what your target audience is, it will be easier to create content that they will be interested in. Some things to think about are the demographics of your target audience:

- Age
- Gender
- Income
- Marital status
- Family dynamic such as kids and pets
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Instagram's users make up 30% of the U.S. population, and 80% of them are under the age of 34. More than half of these will check their Instagram daily (or several times a day). More than 32% of these millennials still live at home with their parents, BUT around 90% of them desire owning a home. However, they are more willing to wait until they find the home that will perfectly suit their lifestyle.

When you know WHO you are trying to attract, you will have a much better chance of connecting with the right leads and the right time.

TIP: If you work with a team of people, include team events as well. Does your team pride themselves on their business acumen? Show the team conducting business that highlights their competitive edge.

Determine Your Branding

Just like you would do with your website and business cards, you want to take the time and make the effort into creating a signature brand. You want to make sure that your Instagram posts reflect you as friendly, knowledgeable, professional, well-connected, and most of all, memorable.

Your posts should have a similar “Feel” and in a way, tell a story. You can choose a filter and use that one for nearly every post, or stick to a certain color palate — something to tie your posts together to create a unified look. Choosing a font and using that consistently throughout your Instagram, website, and other social media platforms also helps to unify your brand.

Posting Content

There are several types of posts you can create, from pictures to video to tips to promos:

- Basic listing post – one picture with information and a Call to Action included.
- Branded “Layout” listing post - several photos compiled into one image, usually one larger with 2 smaller below.
- Artful and professional multi-photo post – also called a carousel post, this is a mini-slide show of images.
- Out and About posts – images of you around town, usually featuring a local business or an event.
- Company highlight – feature a local business on your page as a recommendation
- Views and vistas
- Text post – a motivational saying or a home tip
- Under construction/Coming soon post – new homes that are being built can be preemptively marketed.
- Quick video segments/virtual tours
- Seasonal and local posts
- Agent promo
- Videos: How tos and tips
- Home decorating or renovation ideas

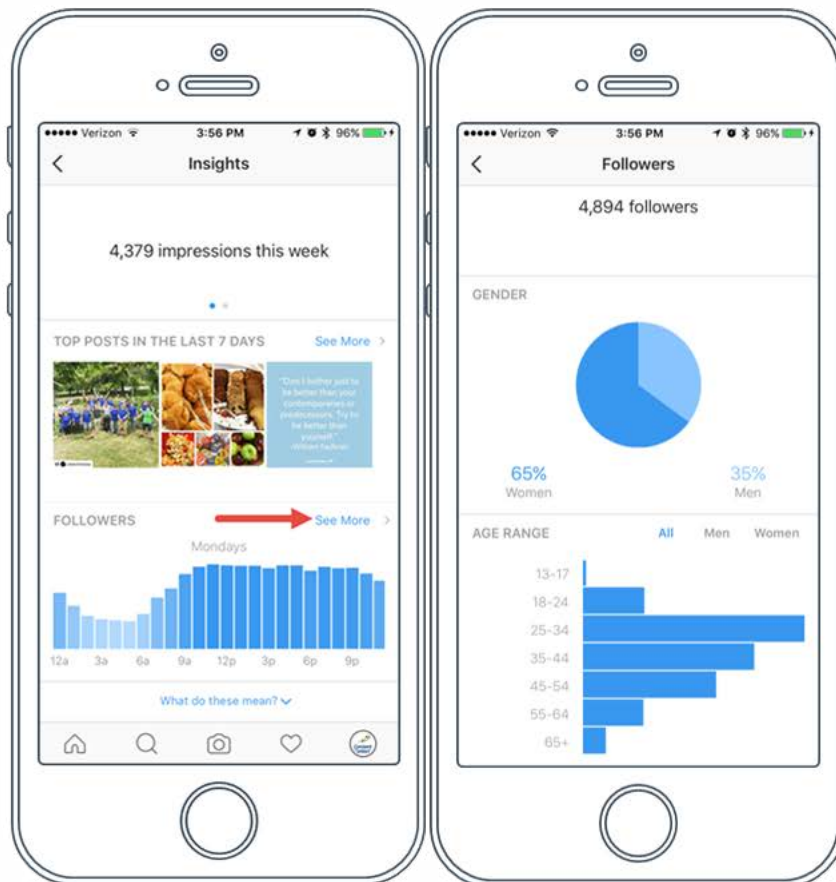
The BIGGEST factor in the images that you post...they need to be stunning.

Insights

When you make your Instagram a business account, you will get access to Insights once you reach 100 followers. This will let you see who is following you, engaging with your posts, and responding to your content. You can make sure that the audience you are attracting with your content fits the target profile that you created in order to find your ideal leads.

You can also use the data to help you determine which posts perform the best (in terms of engagement statistics and actions) which can guide you in the type of content you create in the future.

You can also see which days and times your followers are most likely to be online, which can help you schedule future posts so that you can connect with your leads at the right time.



Create a Content Calendar

Regardless of who your target market is, you want to create a content schedule, including 5 different content categories that you think your target market would like to see posts about. If it's young families, you will want to post content involving festivals and family friendly activities, and the homes nearby. Businessmen? Post about the perks of living in a downtown condo.

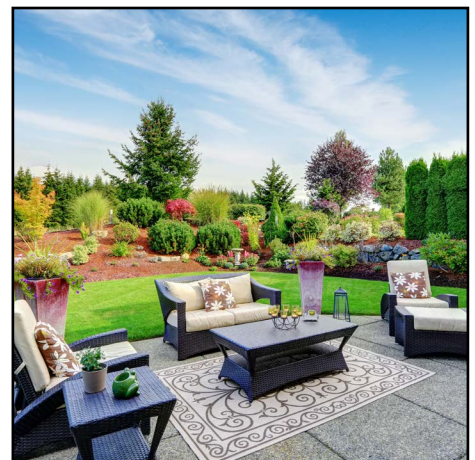
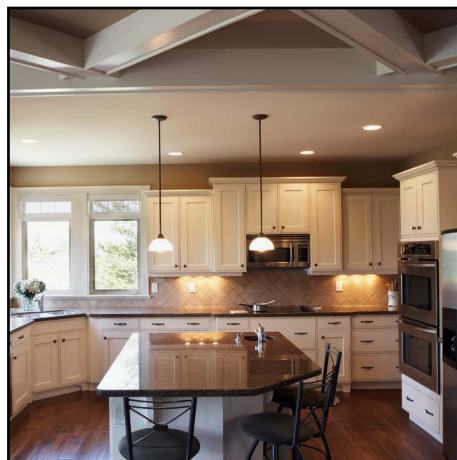
Cycling through these different categories, you can use the information from Insights to schedule your posts for the days and times that your target audience is on Instagram.

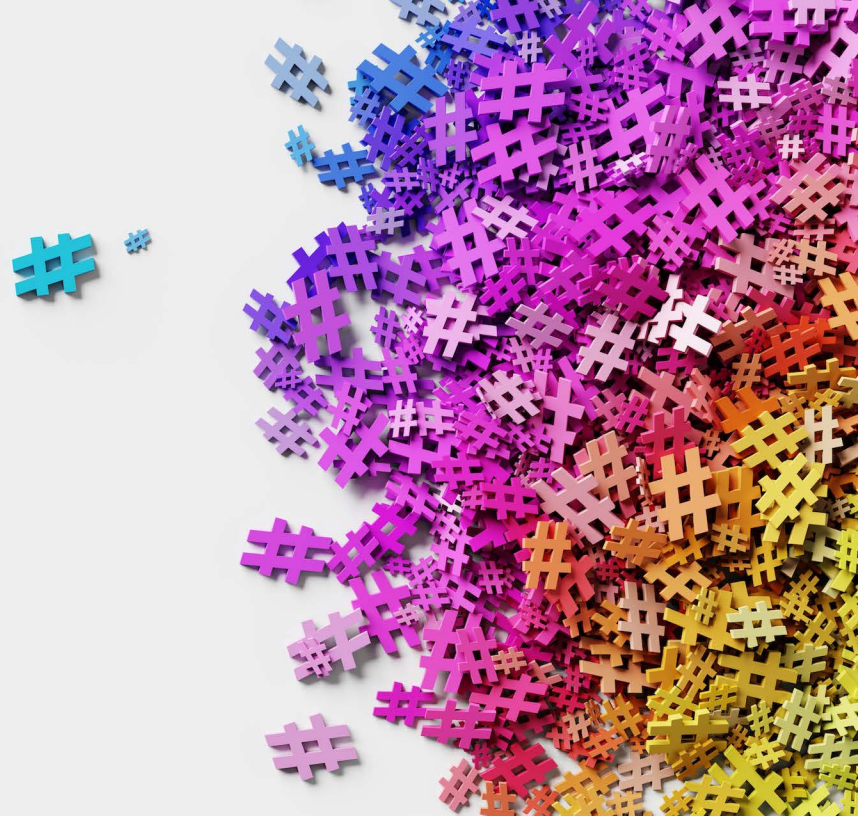
There are plenty of content scheduling/uploading tools that you can use, like "Later", which allow you to create your posts in advance and set the schedule, and then it will message you when it's time to post. This can be convenient when you're busy and may not have time to sit and create the post at the time your target audience tends to be on Instagram.

Use High Quality and High-Resolution Images

If a picture is worth a thousand words, Instagram pictures are worth a thousand leads. Images that you choose to post should fit within certain criteria.

- They should be suitable for the square space you have for your post. Instagram will not post rectangular images, so when you take the pictures, keep that in mind.
- They should harmonize with your brand's color scheme and filters, and overall image
- They should represent listings you are currently marketing





Hashtags

Hashtags are a key piece of every post and act as a way to grab the attention of people searching for the type of content you are posting.

In fact, real estate agents that use hashtags effectively have a 12% higher engagement than those agents that don't use hashtags, or use them ineffectively.

Consider the following hashtags which are the most popular for real estate agents everywhere:

- Highlight your location and farm area with #[neighborhood] and/or #[City]
- Help people find you or your agency with #realestate, #realtor, #[yourrealestatename]
- Advertise your listing or browse the hottest listings with #NewListing, #JustListed, #JustSold, #ForSale, and #OpenHouse.
- If you want to attract a certain category of buyer to support your niche, try hashtags like #[HomeStyle], #Beachfront, #bungalow, #Victorian, #Cabin, #Modern etc.
- Wanting to get even more specific with properties? Try #HouseHunting, #dreamhome, #StarterHome, #Flip, #Investment, #LuxuryLiving, #MillionDollarListing.
- Some other useful hashtags that focus on concepts like renovations or interior decorating or show off before-and-after photos are #DIY, #CurbAppeal, and #UpdatedCharm.

Levels of Marketing

There are different types of marketing that you can do with Instagram.

Broad Audience to Build Your Brand

These types of posts are designed to appeal to the broadest range of your target audience in order to build your following. Posts that offer little giveaways, or motivational quotes that will connect and resonate with the people in your target demographic will catch their attention.

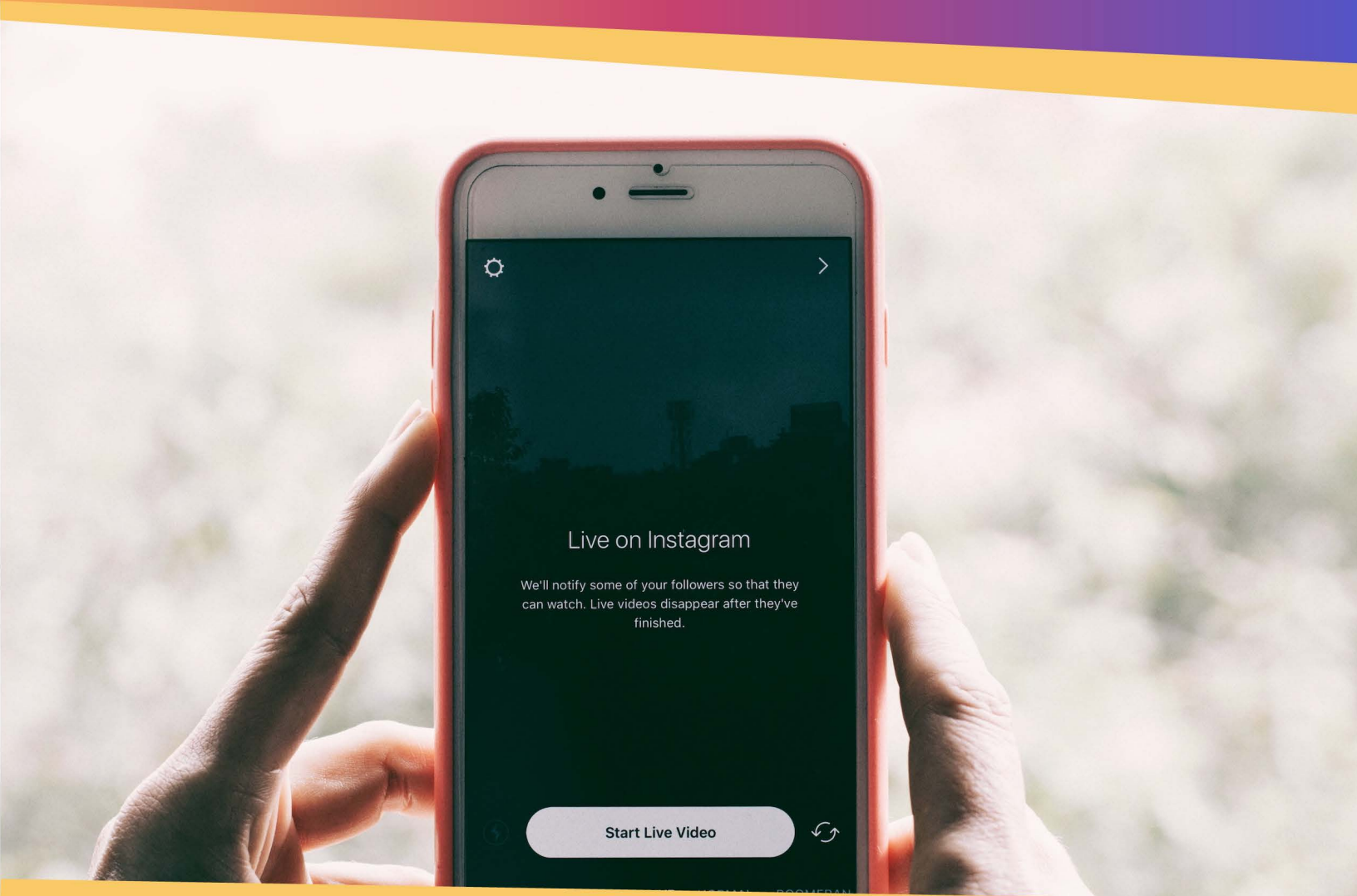
Give Leads Sneak Peaks to Show Your Level of Service

Solidify Leads with “Behind The Scenes” looks at open houses and new listings that aren’t on MLS yet. This inside scoop gives these potential clients an idea of the level of service that you would give them as actual clients, and they are more likely to engage with your post and give you their contact info.

Show Your Followers why YOU are the Best Choice

These posts are the ones geared towards your potential leads who are seriously considering hiring you as their real estate agent. These posts are showing your following that you are THE local real estate expert, who knows all the trends, has the hottest listings, and is going to provide them the best service out of all the agents in town.





Instagram is a BEAUTIFUL and visual way to promote your brand, build a following, and gain visibility as a real estate agent.

It's also fun. Showcase that you are an agent in touch with the times, consistent in creating a social following, and savvy about brand building. Fill your story with resources, links, and graphics that your clients and potential clients will find useful, which means that you will stay top-of-mind when they think about real estate.

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