

Using hashtags effectively on social media

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The hashtag is the best way to categorise content on social media, and makes your content discoverable. It allows you to connect and engage with other people anywhere in the world based on a common theme or interest. They have become such a common practice that people have started using them outside social media – in text messages, conversations, songs and adverts.

How to use a hashtag

Using a hashtag in a social post is just putting the “#” sign before a word or phrase without spaces or punctuation.

- If you use a hashtag on a public account, anyone who searches for that hashtag may find your post.
- Don't put #toomanywordstogetherwithasinglehashtag. It's not easy to read.
- Don't #over #hashtag #in #a #single #post #either.
- Use hashtags only on posts relevant to the topic.
- You can use numbers in hashtags, but not punctuation marks.

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Creating effective hashtags

Be specific

The more specific you can be with your hashtag, the more targeted your audience will be – this generally means better engagement. For example, if you're after Volkswagen lovers the hashtag #vwvan will earn you many more desired followers than #van will.

Cater your hashtags to different social media platforms

Hashtags generally have the same purpose of discovery, but the use of them does vary on different social media platforms. Instagram hashtags are often more focussed on the description of the photo, whereas Twitter hashtags tend to be more focussed on a topic of conversation or a group of people.

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Don't go too long or too clever

Sometimes we can create humour in hashtags by putting in sarcasm or funny anecdotes. But if the purpose of using hashtags is to gain new prospects and engagement, you need to write hashtags that people are going to be searching. For example, if you were a shoe store uploading a photo to social media of your range, the hashtag #notenoughshoesontheplanet adds some personality, but isn't what people are going to be searching. But by also adding #shoelover or #shoeholic you are more likely to get engagement.

Don't over hashtag

Many Instagram users have discovered that more hashtags can mean more followers and likes. So they bombard their photos with the limit of 30 hashtags. Don't do this, you probably don't want any more than 5 hashtags on a post. If you gain followers, they're usually spammers or people who just want a follow back, and it can come off as desperate. Focus on being specific.

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Another good hashtag tip is to research hashtags that trend globally and incorporate them into your company. One example used on all social media profiles is #throwbackthursday (or #TBT), where users upload an old photo – it could be of your first day in the office, you as a child before you became a business owner, or your first product. It could even be an old photo of an inspirational person to you. Here's an example from Wendy's:



42 years ago we opened the 1st modern day pick-up window. So far people seem to like it, but only time will tell #tbt



September 19 at 12:44am ·



Mmmm #NationalCheeseburgerDay.



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Other popular hashtags include #motivationalmonday, #sundayfunday, or random national days like #nationalhotdogday or #nationalsibling day that are fun to get involved in. Check out what Yahoo did for #nationalcheeseburgerday.

With our tips you should be well on your way to hashtagging successfully!

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We specialise in digital marketing, web development and graphic design.



Stephanie Bell,
Belluber Founder

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“Steph has managed to double the number of our sign-ups from just one follow-up email! The work she is doing is great.” – **Andy Camfield, Expert Business Coach**

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