

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH INSTAGRAM?



By Todd Collins

One of the most mysterious social media outlets to many restaurant owners is Instagram. The restaurant owners that utilize it are seeing it pay large dividends.

The first thing to do is get familiar with the social media avenue and application. Because it is a mobile-based social media avenue it will need to be managed from your mobile device. However, software is available that can be used to schedule your posts from a desktop. Facebook purchased Instagram years ago, so it can be fully integrated with your Facebook campaigns.

First you will need to download the application. You would need to visit the app store on your iPhone, or the Google play store on your mobile device. Once downloaded you need to pick a username for your account. For the best results keep it simple and branded to your restaurant. For example, if your restaurant is 'Johnny's' be sure to try to get the username @Johnnys, or make it

hyper-local ... @JohnnysBaltimore.

Once you have created the account you will need to designate the profile as a 'business account'. This will give you the ability to run promoted ads, or sponsored posts. This is good for events or when you are just starting out to gain brand exposure. The business account also gives you the ability to have clickable links in your profile to your site or a menu.

Once you have done this it's time to pick a profile picture. Stick to your branded logo, and keep it similar to your other social media profile images. It is important to cross post, so be sure to announce on Facebook, Twitter, Google etc. that you are on Instagram and request your followers to follow you there as well.

Instagram is the second largest social media avenue in the world. With that being said, if you are not posting there daily you are only hurting yourself. Instagram also gives you the ability to not only edit photos and video, but to go live from wherever you are for your followers. This can be an incredibly

useful promotion tool. Announce events, inform your followers of that day's specials, etc. Video tends to get more attention on social media, so be sure to invest in either professional video services, or post plenty of video within your brand.

Instagram also has a very important (and often overlooked) feature, which is Instagram Stories. This is a way for your brand to show up almost like a FREE Advertisement to your followers. Similar to Snapchat; you are able to add daily videos or images to keep it fun and interesting for your followers. Additionally, you are able to create hyperlinks within the videos or images.

Deciding to launch an Instagram account is a big decision, because it will take time for you to build your following. However, if you want to reach that 25-45-age audience, Instagram is where they are at least 15-20 times per day.

As always, I offer my assistance with these types of topics for FREE. If you would like to reach me for more information please do. ■ (todd@beveragejournalinc.com)

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