

# How your charity can punch

# above its weight on Instagram

Almost everyone has at least heard of Instagram. But perhaps you're not sure how best to use it for your charity especially if you're a smaller organisation with limited resources. This is a timely topic of conversation. Last June Small Charity Week, organised by the Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI) was held. The Small Charities Coalition (SCC) used the week to launch their Big Support Small campaign, where they're encouraging charities of different sizes to work together to have a powerful impact.

This got me thinking about how we in larger organisations, like the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) can help. In our 2019 Charity Landscape report, it was revealed that 86% of charities with an annual income of below £1m are trying to boost social media engagement, or are planning on doing so in the next 12 months.

I know that 91% of charities are run by volunteers and have limited budgets. So, with this in mind, I wanted to share this quick and easy guide for small charities full of free advice on how to get up and running on Instagram.

Let's start with some juicy stats:

- Instagram is the second most engaged with network after Facebook
- There are 1 billion monthly active users and 25 million business profiles
- Users like 4.2 billion posts per day
- There are 95 million posts per day and 500 million stories a day

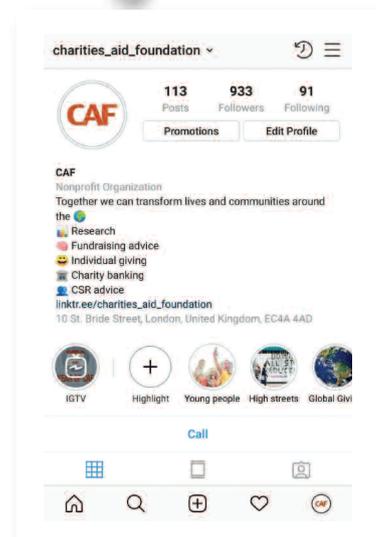
And most importantly: it's your chance to tell your story and reach donors, volunteers and advocates.

Before you start using Instagram:

- Think about your charity's objectives and who you want to reach
- Decide how Instagram will help you meet your objectives and what part of the journey the platform will take your audience on
- If you have capacity, create a one pager outlining your strategy for Instagram and if you can, add a timeline of events. This will save you time in the long run and help you see if the platform is working for you

## Setting up your profile

- Make sure you always have the latest version of the app – it's always being updated with new features and will prioritise content which uses them
- Set up your business account. This will link to your Facebook page and allows you to access additional insights
- Make sure you use an on-brand Instagram profile picture such as your charity's logo
- Your 'bio' (the description at the top of your profile) is one of the first things your visitors will see. You have a maximum of 150 characters; use them smartly to let people know what you're about and give them a reason to follow you. Include who you are



and what you do, and be sure to add a hint of personality. Keep it simple. You can also add an address and contact number. Make sure you include a link to your website. A special hint: check out *Linktree*

## Instagram stories

It's all about the "in the moment" experiences on Instagram, which are growing 15 times faster than feed-based sharing. People are now more likely to go straight to your story rather than scrolling through their feed.

Aim to post stories daily if you want to feature before other organisations at the top on the feed.

Stories are great for events and behind

the scenes pictures and videos. Your stories are also 'Discoverable', which means that people who don't follow you can see your posts too!

You also get a nice two for one perk, as you can link to both your Instagram and Facebook stories simultaneously - all within the Instagram app.

### To boost your reach:

- Tag partners
- Use hashtags
- Share other people's stories who've tagged you in theirs
- Remember: you can share posts within your story
- Use as many features as you can to beat those pesky algorithms

You can also include your podcast by sharing it from Soundcloud – so if you do have a podcast, this is definitely worth doing.

Instagram has recently announced that they'll be introducing a donate button within stories, with no processing fee for donations and the full amount will go to the charity, another reason why your charity should be on Instagram.

We've all got stories to tell and there are many ways to express them. We can achieve this through imagery and video, which is especially effective on Instagram. You can add volunteering stories, share impact stories, share donor stories, case studies, behind the scenes clips and so on.

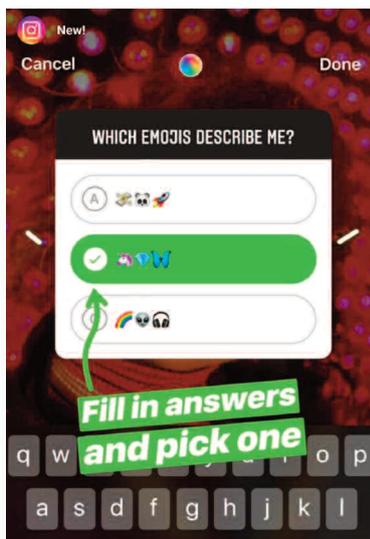
The beauty with Instagram posts is that you can use various sized images, which won't get cropped in the feed, unless you want them to of course.

Experts say you should use high quality photos on Instagram; but it's sometimes difficult if you don't have a top of the range mobile phone or DSLR camera. As long as it's not blurry, people can see exactly what it is and there's a great story behind it, then post it. It's all about being 'in the moment and sharing this with your audience.

I love this 'Ask a question' example from the Woodgreen animal charity:

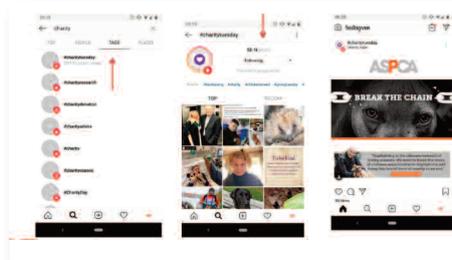


There's now even a quiz sticker:



If you want to use filters on your images, always use the exact same one to create your unique style and to keep your feed looking consistent.

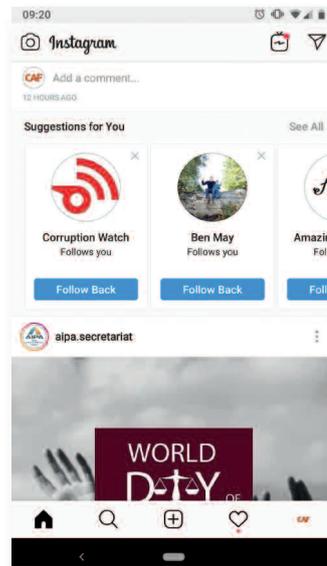
Video use is increasing year-on-year. In 2017, 74% of all internet traffic was video; that's risen to 80% in 2019. You can only upload videos between three and 60 seconds long in your Instagram feed. Just recently however, Instagram has started to allow users to add longer videos to the feed via IGTV (Instagram TV). These act as a preview to the longer versions which can be watched via IGTV all within the same app. Remember IGTV is vertical, so be sure to film in portrait.



### Following hashtags

Make sure you follow relevant hashtags so you can track and engage with content, especially any campaign hashtags you've created, as this allows you to see what others have posted even if they've forgotten to tag you. Make sure to like and comment on posts relevant to your charity – this will increase your brand awareness and make you visible to those who don't know about you. Your profile will be recommended to other users too.

**Hannah Iqbal** is the Social Media Manager at Charities Aid Foundation. Follow them on Twitter @caf



### And remember...

The more comments you get, the more likely your post will appear in your followers' timeline and search feed. This will help you reach more people. It might mean that you appear in the search feed of people who don't follow you; they could then see your post and may choose to visit your profile and follow you as a result.

Basically, engagement = more eyeballs in the search feed.

### Use insights

You can use insights to help you see when your followers are most engaged. Tailor your content to these times of day, and think about who your audience is most likely to be. People also generally go on social media during the commute to and from work and lunchtimes. Also think about when they're at home in the evening and weekends. More people are now using their phones whilst watching TV or simply hanging out.

I'll leave you with some final tips:

- Posts that include another handle gain 56% more engagement – don't forget to tag people or organisations who are relevant to your content
- Posts with at least one hashtag gain 12.6% more engagement – incorporate all appropriate hashtags into your post
- Posts with a location receive 79% more engagement – try and include one wherever possible
- Photos see more engagement than videos on Instagram.