

Top five Instagram trends for 2015

 By [Desiree Gullan](#)

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Since the trail-blazing millennials and too-cool-for-Facebook hipsters started the migration to Instagram five years ago, we've seen a visual content explosion...

With over [20 billion images](#) uploaded to date, the challenge for amateur smartphone snappers, influential Instagrammers and brands is to remain not only relevant but also exceptionally fascinating. With constantly emerging and changing trends, this is a moving goal post. So, what's the latest?

Layout from Instagram - not just another third-party app

You may have seen, tried and deleted hundreds of collage and photo-editing apps to date. What makes most of these apps more often misses than hits, is the fact they are created by third parties. Layout is different. It's the latest photo collage app developed by Instagram for Instagram.

With a selection of up to 10 collage templates and several 'tweaking' options, it makes photo collages easy to create and share across other channels.

Why use it? It creates an element of intrigue that will stop users mid-scroll and keep them engaged with your content for longer. It's also more user-friendly than other photo collage apps and integrates seamlessly with Instagram. Just don't forget to include #Layout in your caption.

Instagram videos - do the loop

More customisable than Vine, easier to use than Hyperlapse and a whole lot trendier than Snapchat, Instagram video has become the golden egg of Instagram feeds. Earlier this year, the photo-hosting giant introduced 'looping videos' - stepping firmly on the toes of the unique Vine offering.



The short-form video format unlocks infinite opportunities for creative executions that tell compelling stories and keep viewers coming back for more - no replay button needed. Brands such as Mini and GAP have set the bar extremely high when it comes to drawing users in to watch the next instalment of the #CountryMan or #SpringIsWeird mini-series.

Use this medium to personify your brand, tell its story and bring it to life in new ways.

Nobody's going to hashtag your brand #sorrynotsorry

Unless your brand has already received cult status, it's time to drop your #CompanyName hashtag. The Instagram community sees right through your marketing strategy. Be subtle, be smart and be authentic as you tactfully align yourself with trends using a well thought-out and relevant hashtag strategy.

Instagram is all about being effortlessly cool - overt marketing tactics are the antithesis of that.

Integrate with already existing conversations and trends rather than shouting your unrelated messages out in a crowded room of tortoise shell wayfarers and skinny jeans. That also doesn't mean that you should include all the conventional #love, #cute, #tagsforlikes hashtags championed by bored teenagers either.

Tailor it to your game and fit it to your target market. GAP got it right here too with their dedicated #DressNormal hashtag. If you're an outdoor apparel brand, think #campvibes or #beneaththebrim - something that speaks to your brand's social personality and associated lifestyle rather than its commercial reputation.

Instameets - gather all the influencers (and their friends)

'Instagrammers' are the bloggers of the Instagram tribe. These creative geniuses can be persuaded to craft beautiful content around your brand persona in an authentic manner if you only treat them to the personalised products and experiences that match their creative pursuits.

Invite them for a chat over artisan coffee, casually conceptualise a collaborative Instameet for them and their equally creative friends and watch the visual content flourish around your brand.

Instagram advertising - no free-spirited hipsters here

There's no room for purist hipster principles here. Social media channels have become a pay-to-play space and Instagram is not going alternative on this one. In 2014, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Snapchat all experimented with advertising options. Instagram will follow suit in 2015.

It is unclear exactly what form this advertising may take place on the platform. Early reports suggest targeting options based on age, sex and location. Start thinking ahead about how to best tap into the opportunities this presents.

ABOUT DESIREE GULLAN

Having worked at the 'Big Three' advertising agencies in SA and proving her creative mettle abroad, Desirée has won multiple local and international awards for her work - including Cannes Lions and Clios. She believes in the importance of craftsmanship - that it's not in the designing, but in the redesigning. Not in the writing, but in the re-writing.

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