Eventbrite

How to Use Instagram Stories to Build Buzz Around Your Event
Social media isn’t always friendly to brands. You probably know the statistics already — businesses with Facebook pages usually only reach 2.6% of their followers, and the story is very similar on Twitter.

The one exception? Instagram.

In a time when algorithm changes are making event promotion on social media increasingly difficult, Instagram is a shining example of how to connect with event-goers. 80% of Instagram users follow at least one business on Instagram, and 200 million users check out a brand’s profile every day. Perhaps most importantly, 30% of Instagram users have made a purchase that they first saw on Instagram.

That makes the platform a treasure trove of potential attendees who want to engage with your brand. And with more than 300 million daily active users, Instagram Stories are the future of the platform.

Read on to learn why your event’s team can’t afford to ignore Instagram Stories, and how to use the feature to drive real ticket sales.
For event brands, the “Stories” function helps create a narrative, with multiple videos or pictures strung together to tell your audience a larger story.

Stories can be found both on the feed and your profile page. Once you click on the small circular image, you’ll see the Stories: a series of photos and videos up to 10 seconds long that frequently have filters, stickers, lenses, text, and more overlaid. You can also slow-down, speed up, rewind, or “Boomerang” (looping video) from your videos. Which features you choose to use will depend on your event’s audience.

Traditionally, this content has been taken and uploaded the same day, but Instagram and Snapchat now both allow you to upload older photos and videos as well. Stories can be viewed by your followers for 24 hours (at which point they disappear). On Instagram, you can now save your favorite Stories to your profile as well.
Don’t rely on the buzz to understand the popularity of Stories — the true power of the feature is in user engagement. **One in five** Stories posted by a brand receives a direct message from a follower. **70%** of Stories are watched with the sound on (unlike Facebook, where the majority of videos are watched on silent). And — most importantly for events — **one-third** of the most viewed Stories come from businesses.

As an event brand, this ephemeral posting method has strategic applications:

- **Testing content:** Stories are ideal for testing new tactics and types of content in an environment that’s not permanent.

- **Teasing announcements:** Before artist or speaker announcements, tease the reveal with hints such as the speaker’s initials or a blurred picture that your followers have to decipher.

- **Inspiring FOMO:** Because the posts disappear, showcasing insider info, behind the scenes content, or flash sale promotions here will incite FOMO (fear of missing out).

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Stories also have a more immediate benefit: driving ticket sales. Make sure your team uses the following features that are vital to driving engagement and sales:

- **Tag users and hashtags:** Because you can embed hashtags and tag users right on these images, you can use this format to attract additional followers. Instagram also now has the ability for users to follow hashtags — not just accounts — so using hashtags strategically can help your content surface to new audiences.

- **Add links to your ticketing page:** Once you have 10,000 followers, your team can add clickable links to your Stories (something you can’t do with traditional Instagram posts). Don’t miss this opportunity to link to your ticketing page — once a week at minimum.

- **Include polls for quick follower feedback:** Polls are one of Instagram Stories’ newer features. Encourage your team to use them to get a quick pulse on what followers want to see, eat, and do at your event.
Don’t make these common Stories mistakes

As your team begins to craft Stories, make sure they don’t make these two newbie mistakes:

• **Posting horizontal videos:** Instagram Stories are built for vertical images, and most users won’t bother turning their phone to see your horizontal image.

• **Not saving your Stories:** If you want to be able to reuse Stories for other promotions, turn on auto-save to store each picture and video you send.
If your team simply posts photos to your event’s Stories and calls it a day, you shouldn’t be satisfied. Instagram Stories have many more sophisticated tools your team can and should be using to drive real ticket sales through the platform:

**Live video**

You can shoot live video using Instagram Stories (the feature is very similar to Facebook Live). According to Digitell, up to 30% of people who watch a livestream of an event will attend the same event in person the following year, so livestreaming could be worth your time. You can also use Instagram live video before and during your event to share short clips of an interview with a speaker or performer, give followers a behind-the-scenes look backstage, or answer attendees’ frequent questions. (Your team can learn more about how to use live video to drive engagement and sales in this blog post.)

**Influencers**

If you don’t yet have an influencer strategy for your event, it’s time — and influencers thrive on Instagram Stories. Partner with local influencers, sponsors, performers, or even popular vendors on Instagram to become your brand ambassadors. Consider letting one of them do an “Instagram takeover” of your account (or vice versa). In a takeover, influencers create Stories from your account for a day or a week and encourage their fans to follow your account to follow along. Just be sure your team has made the terms of your relationship clear before the promotion begins — they can learn more in this post.
Contests

Social media contests are a powerful way to motivate followers to spread the word about your event to their friends. Consider asking entrants to tag your event’s handle or use your event’s hashtag in one of their Stories for entrance. Then, be sure to broadcast the winners on your Stories to build buzz. (Send your team to this post to learn the most effective ways to use social media contests for events.)

Advertisements

Instagram Stories ads appear between people’s stories as a photo or video. Businesses like AirBnB have used the ad type to great success, with AirBnB reporting a double digit increase in ad recall. Encourage your team to test them as part of your social media advertising strategy and report back on results. (They can get started with this blog post.)
The Stories feature is Instagram’s newest darling, and the platform is putting more and more emphasis on it, including the recent addition of an inline stories promotion in users’ feeds and the ability for users to feature stories highlights on profile pages. As an event brand, if you don’t take advantage of Stories now, you’ll get left behind.

But how can your team go beyond building buzz with Stories — and actually use the tech to drive ticket sales and attendee loyalty? The secret is in making it as easy as possible for Instagram users to buy tickets to your event — without being redirected to a clunky ticketing website that’s not built for their phones.

To learn how your team can upgrade your event’s checkout to better convert social media users, contact us or get in touch at 1-866-902-2531.
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