



TIPS TO WIN INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

Creativity and originality can draw eyes to your photo and video postings.

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Instagram is a smart and fun way to share pictures and videos online. It also allows users to share photos and short videos on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and other social networks. Eye care professionals can use Instagram to post and share interesting, informative and educational images and videos to promote their practices.

The key to using Instagram lies in gaining more followers who may like or share the content to help you achieve greater exposure for your eye care practice. This column lists some pointers to help you do just that.

CHOOSE UNIQUE, RELEVANT, ORIGINAL PHOTOS

Be selective about each image that you post on your Instagram account. Make sure it is unique; it is relevant to the specific eye care procedures, technologies, products, and services you provide; and it is original, as much as is possible. Images related to your own practice can add authenticity to your account, and these types of images may appeal most strongly to your audiences.

MAKE THE MOST OF 15-SECOND VIDEOS

The length of an Instagram video can range from 3 to 15 seconds. This makes Instagram an entirely different kind of tool from YouTube. Many online visitors are impatient, and for them information must be packed into a brief video. Use your Android phone or iPhone to create an Instagram video related to eye care. If you can do it creatively, like a successful television commercial, your video has the potential to connect with audiences, go viral, and fetch you a large number of followers.

APPLY TRENDING HASHTAGS

You can identify trending and popular hashtags related to eye care through websites such as top-hashtags.com,

tagsforlikes.com, and tagstagram.com. Use of popular hashtags can help you to achieve greater visibility for your photos and videos and eventually to generate more followers. Check out the Instagram Help Center to learn how to use hashtags with your videos. Ensure that you use hashtags moderately at all times, and do not let your postings appear spammy.

TIME POSTINGS STRATEGICALLY

A photo on a busy social network such as Instagram will typically have only about 3 to 6 hours of maximum visibility on the news feed. Therefore, ideally, you should post your images according to the profile of your eye care patients and followers within your network. If a majority of them are working adults, you might consider posting images in the evenings on weekdays or during the day over the weekend, when more people might be checking their accounts.

EMPLOY INTERACTIVE TACTICS

If you have what you think is an outstanding image or video to post on your Instagram account, you might



Attract followers on Instagram: eyetubeod.com/?v=eposifono.

announce a simple online contest such as providing a unique title or caption for it. To create an incentive, offer a discount or a free service for the winner. Publicize the contest over other social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Use the hashtag #contest to let people find your content more easily.

OPTIMIZE NAME AND USERNAME

In search queries, Instagram considers only your name and username. Therefore, you can increase your chances of being found if you add your qualification, designation, or industry niche with your name. For instance, you might write in the name column, "John Doe, MD, Ophthalmologist." This will help you gain more targeted and relevant followers over time.

BUILD AN EFFECTIVE BIO

One of the first things that an Instagram user is likely to look for is your brief biography. Therefore, you need a good bio to make a good first impression. An effective bio will encourage users to follow you. Create a suitable bio that will appeal to your average audience profile. Try not to make it too serious, and reveal the fun side of your personality.

Employ wit and humor, or ask a rhetorical question. Instagram lets you space your bio vertically by simply hitting the enter key on your keyboard. This will help you create a clearer bio that lets your strengths stand out. Include a link to your eye care practice website in the bio, and use hashtags, too. Add a "call to action" in the bio, encouraging visitors to check out your website or call you for an appointment.

MAKE GOOD USE OF FILTERS

The Instagram app includes 20 filters, which allow you to personalize photos and make their appearance unique. The filters were one of the reasons that sent the popularity of Instagram soaring when it was launched. A variety of free photo editing apps are also available online that allow you to transform images the way you want. Originality and innovation in the use of these tools will get you more likes, shares, and followers.

The simplicity of Instagram has made it highly popular for both personal and business use. The service already has more than 200 million monthly active users, and it is still growing at a fast pace. Consider leveraging the visual power and reach of Instagram to provide a creative boost to your eye care marketing strategy. ■

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