

2023 Instagram Engagement Report

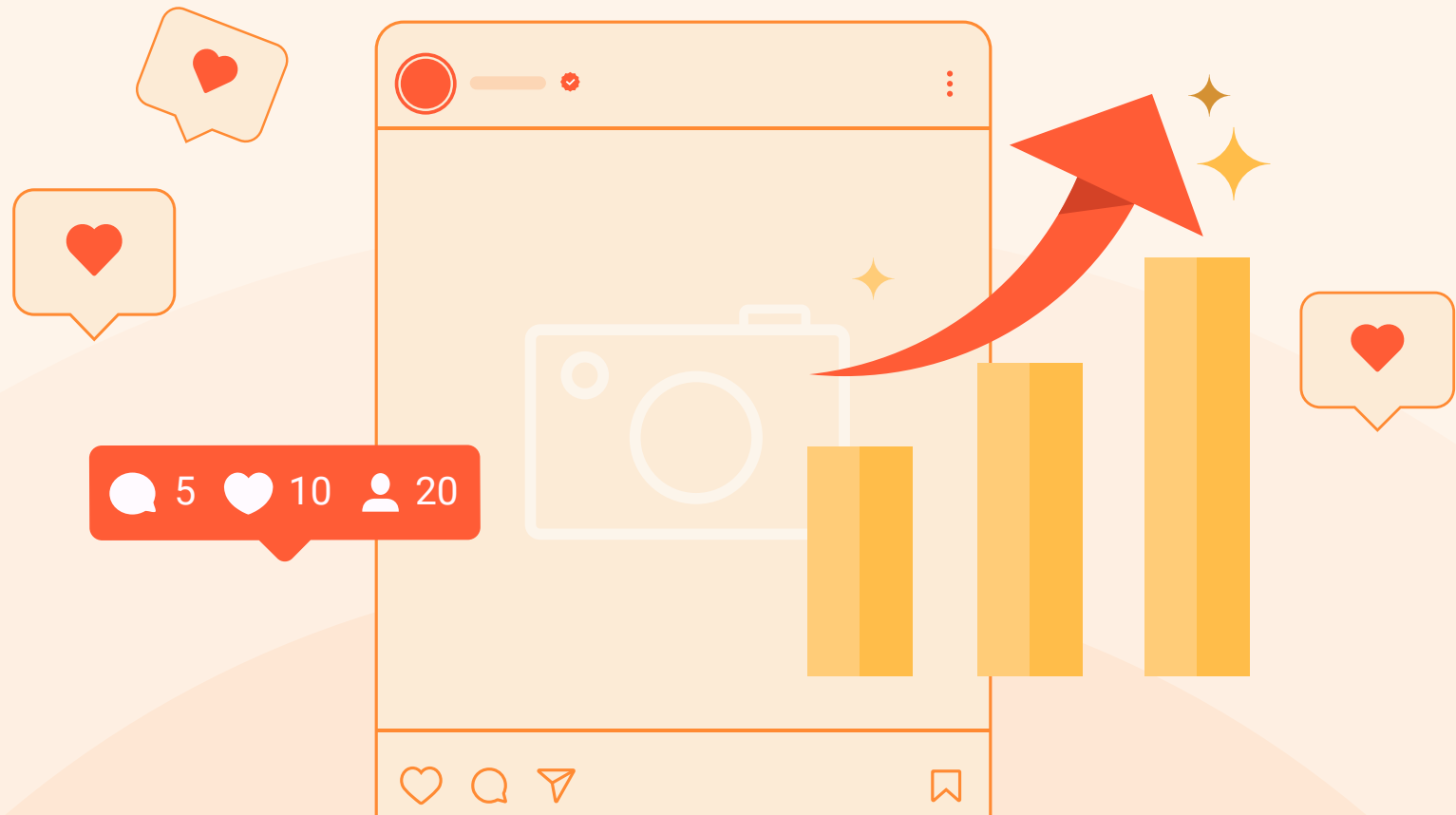


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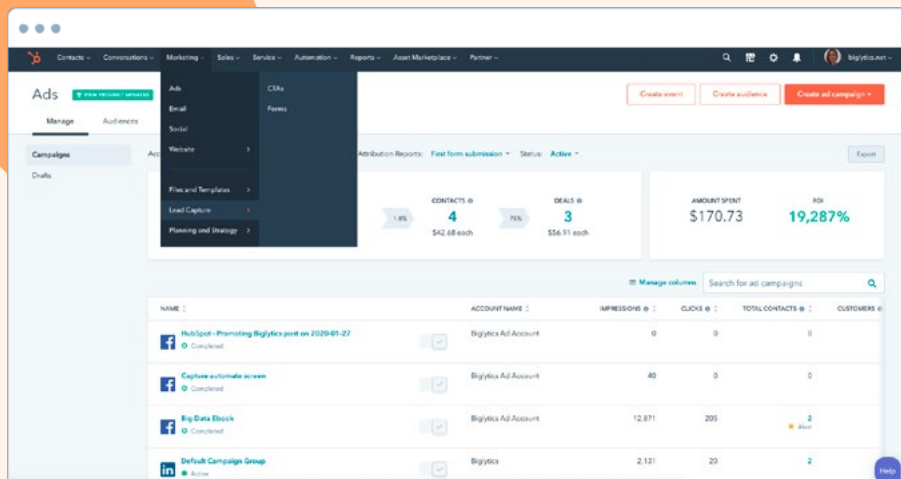
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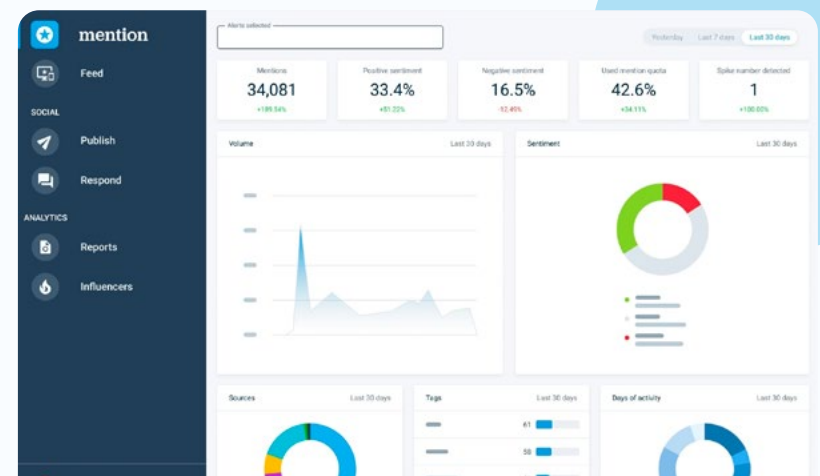
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Introduction

In 2022, Instagram saw bigger accounts, more engaged users, and truly worldwide reach. The platform is a crucial part of today's social media landscape, from #funnyreels to heartfelt captions to up-to-the-minute coverage of global events.

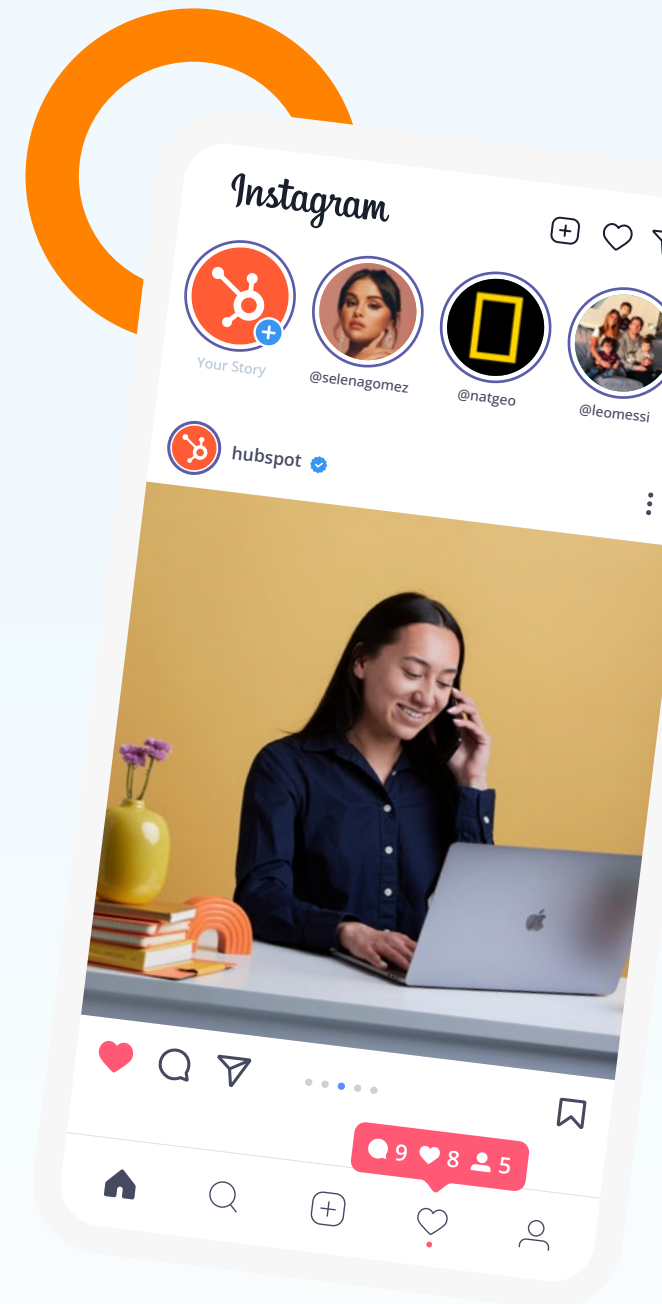
Despite our changing online world, Instagram remains one of the world's most popular social media platforms. Over 1 billion people browse the app every month, and across all platforms, we're spending two and a half hours each day on social. That represents millions of chances for marketers to connect with new customers and grow communities around their brand.

Scrolling through Instagram is a bit like browsing store shelves, flipping through flyers, and talking to a brand's employees all in one. It's where we discover new products, get to know companies, and build strong relationships with the ones we support.

That's incredibly exciting, but it can also present a lot of pressure for marketers. What should we post? When should we share? What's going on with emojis, captions, and hashtags?

To cut through the noise, we analyzed tens of millions of Instagram posts from all over the world... with sometimes surprising results!

Here are the trends we uncovered, from follower counts to engagement rates, posting times, content formats, and so much more.



Methodology

Instagram is a literal ocean of content—we'd drown in data if we tried to analyze it all!

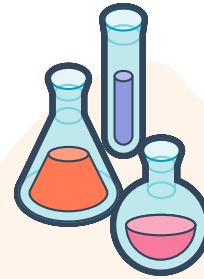
To come up with the figures in this report, we compiled a representative sample of 37 million Instagram posts, spanning January 1st to November 30th, 2022.

Global Data

Beyond looking into the global community, we wanted to understand how people in different parts of the world use Instagram.

Last year, we focused on North America and the United Kingdom, but for 2023, we branched out of the English-speaking world to include the Asia-Pacific region. We included geotagged posts from North America, Asia-Pacific, the United Kingdom and Ireland. These samples were analyzed separately, to generate our regional insights, as well as being part of our global dataset.

As we mention later in our report, geotags don't guarantee that the content was posted from the tagged location, but they generally do imply it was aimed at that audience. So, these regional figures give us insight into how content performed with users in these regions, whether or not the poster was located there.



Engagement Data

This report focuses heavily on engagement because we believe it's one of the most powerful metrics Instagram marketers can use to track their success.

'Engagements' refer to the number of likes and comments on a specific post. But we've used engagement rate, rather than the total number of engagements, as our metric.

To calculate the engagement rate, we divide that number of engagements by how many followers a user has. That shows us what percentage of their followers engaged with the post. In the 'Engagement by city' section, we analyzed only cities that had been geotagged more than 10,000 times, in the name of more representative averages.

This is a more useful figure for most marketers because it's easier to benchmark against your own performance. If Selena Gomez gets 10,000 likes, that's great—but it's not going to help you if you have 2,500 followers!

Report Highlights

- Nearly 23% of accounts now have between 10k and 1M followers.
- Engagement is much higher among Asia-Pacific's users, but it's also more sensitive to factors like caption length, emoji use, and time of day.
- Posts tagged in India were highly engaging. Could users here be driving high engagement in Asia-Pacific?
- Spain has become a content hotspot, rising from 10th to 4th place by post volume.
- Over half of 2022's most engaging hashtags mentioned Reels or videos.
- United Kingdom users were most engaged after midnight! Watch out for blue light before bedtime, Brits!
- The most-followed Asia-Pacific Instagrammer, cricketer Virat Kohli, has nearly triple the following of his next runner-up.



The State of Instagram in 2023

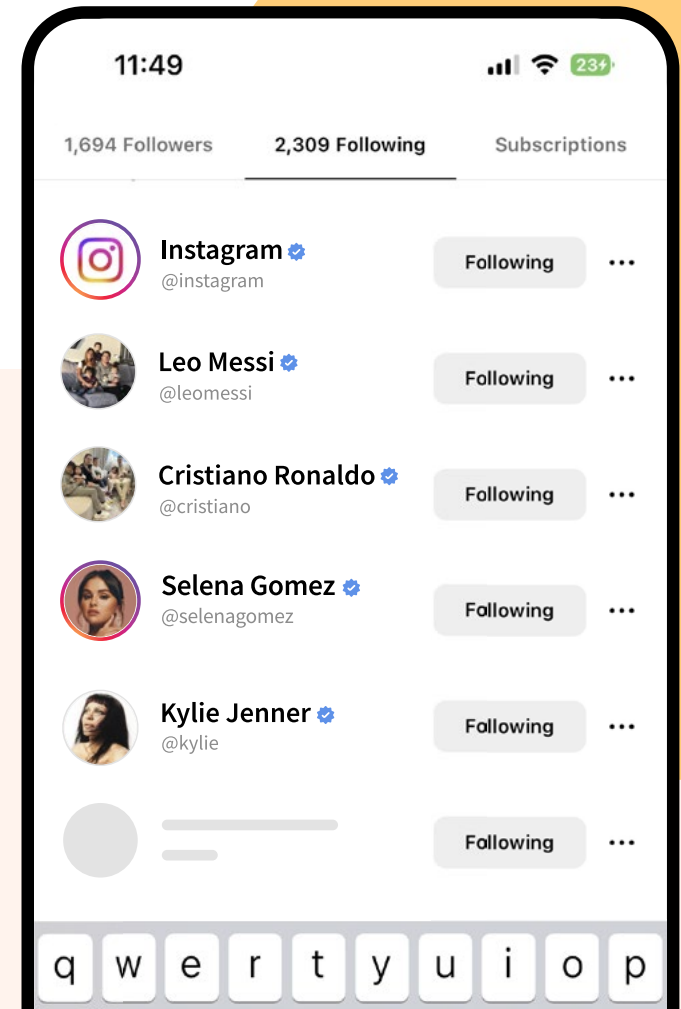
Who's On Top?

Instagram's top accounts have truly incredible followings, surpassing the populations of many countries. If you've ever liked Kylie's latest baby pic or followed along with Messi's wins, you're sharing an experience with millions of other humans.

Curious about Instagram's current reigning royalty? Let's break it down to find the global and regional winners (as of early 2023, at least).

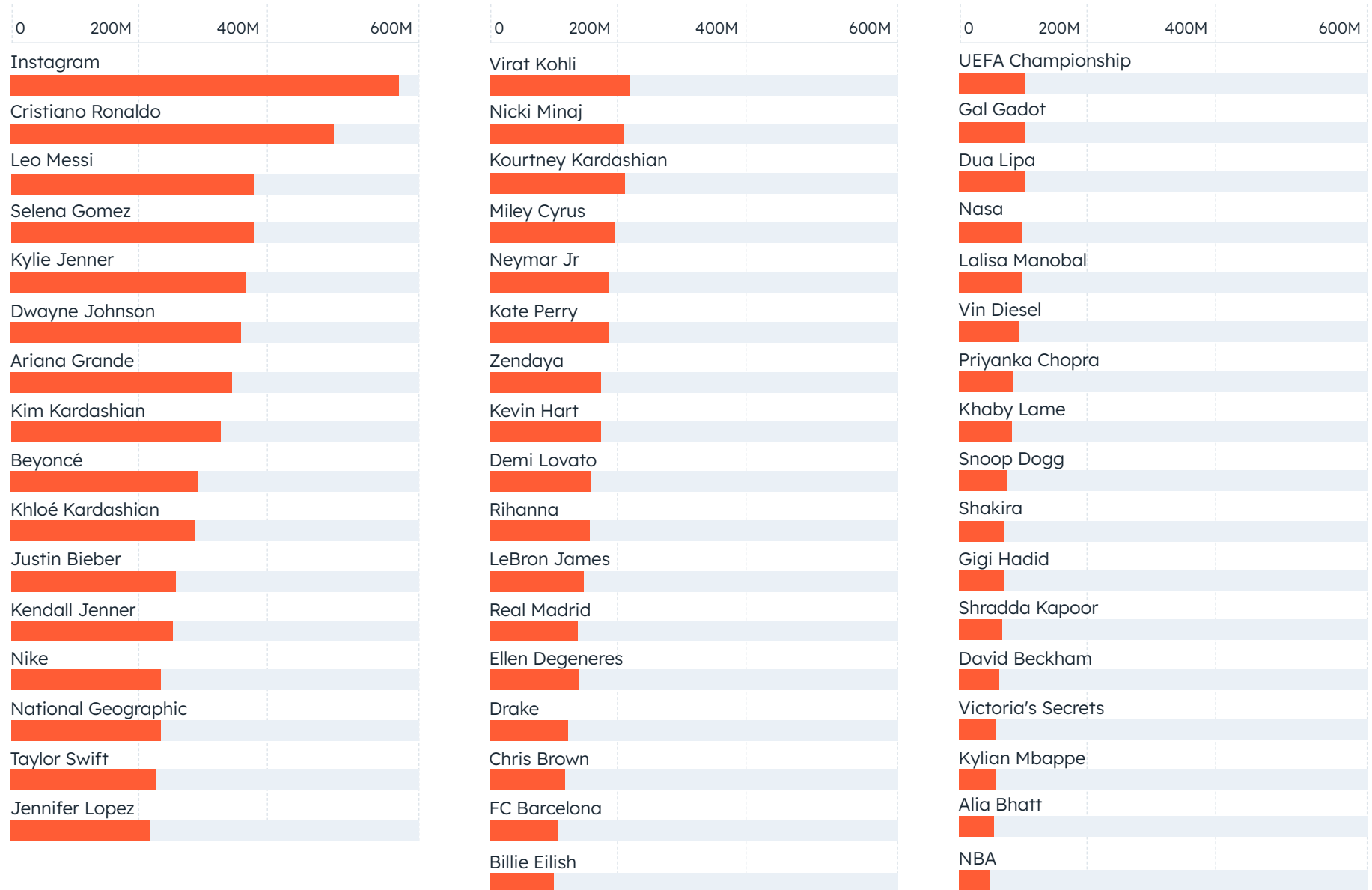
Highlights

- 2023's top accounts are nearly the same as last year, though Selena Gomez has taken the No. 4 spot over Kylie Jenner.
- Brands make up 12% of the global top 50 and were completely absent from Asia-Pacific and the United Kingdom's winners.
- News and media fell out of the UK's top 20.
- The most-followed brands were all sports- or nature-related.



Globally

Top 50 Instagram accounts by followers



This year's Top 4 accounts are almost the same as last year!

Instagram itself is #1, followed by football icons Cristiano Ronaldo and Leo Messi. Singer, actress, and businesswoman Selena Gomez has taken the #4 spot, which was previously held by Kylie Jenner, who is perhaps the ultimate influencer.

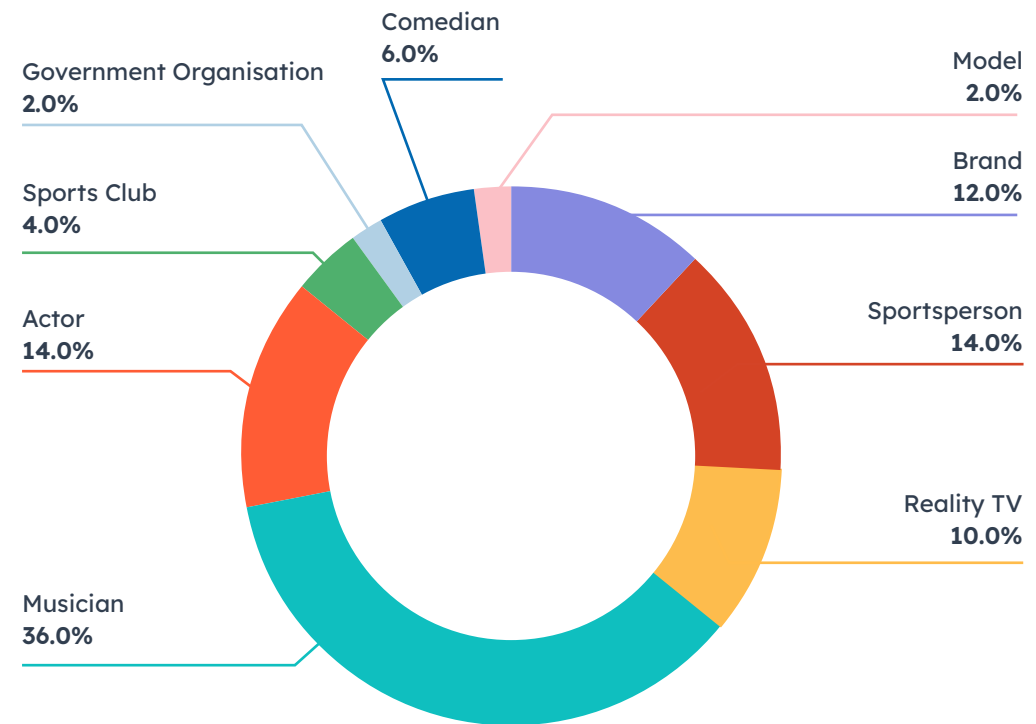
It's also been a good year for Khloe Kardashian, who moved from 11th to 10th place—all the Kardashian sisters are still present in the global Top 50.

One inspiring success story is TikTok star Khaby Lame. After barely skating into the Top 50 last year, he gained an incredible 20 million followers and is now sitting at #41.

Lame is known for simple, yet highly effective comedic videos that rely on facial expressions and gestures. Because he makes people laugh without saying a word, his audience can speak any language!

What Kind of Accounts Are Most Followed?

Types of accounts in the top 50



Tough news for Instagram marketers! The most-followed accounts on Instagram are nearly all celebrities and public figures.

Musicians came in first at 36%, followed by actors and athletes at 14% each, then brands. Reality TV stars also made a strong showing (we can thank the Kardashians for this category), rounded out by comedians, sports clubs, and top models.

Top brands on Instagram

Nike, which moved from 15th to 13th, was the most-followed brand after IG itself. They were followed closely by National Geographic, who held that spot last year.

The most-followed brands were rounded out by UEFA Champions League, Victoria's Secret, FC Barcelona, Real Madrid, NASA, and the NBA.

Noticing a pattern? Nearly all these top brands are related to sports or nature!

Again, brands came in third in this ranking, making up just 12% of accounts in the Top 50. Third place isn't bad, but that's still a small slice of the Instagram pie.

However, we don't believe this should be discouraging. Rather, marketers should focus on growing communities that help them reach their goals, not striving for more and more followers as a vanity metric.



Tips + Tricks: How Nike Wins Instagram

Nike is more than just a brand, and it's definitely more than just sneakers—it's a cultural icon.

Sports, along with entertainment, are the most-followed niches on Instagram. But Nike's deep connection to athletics isn't the only reason it's the second-most followed brand.

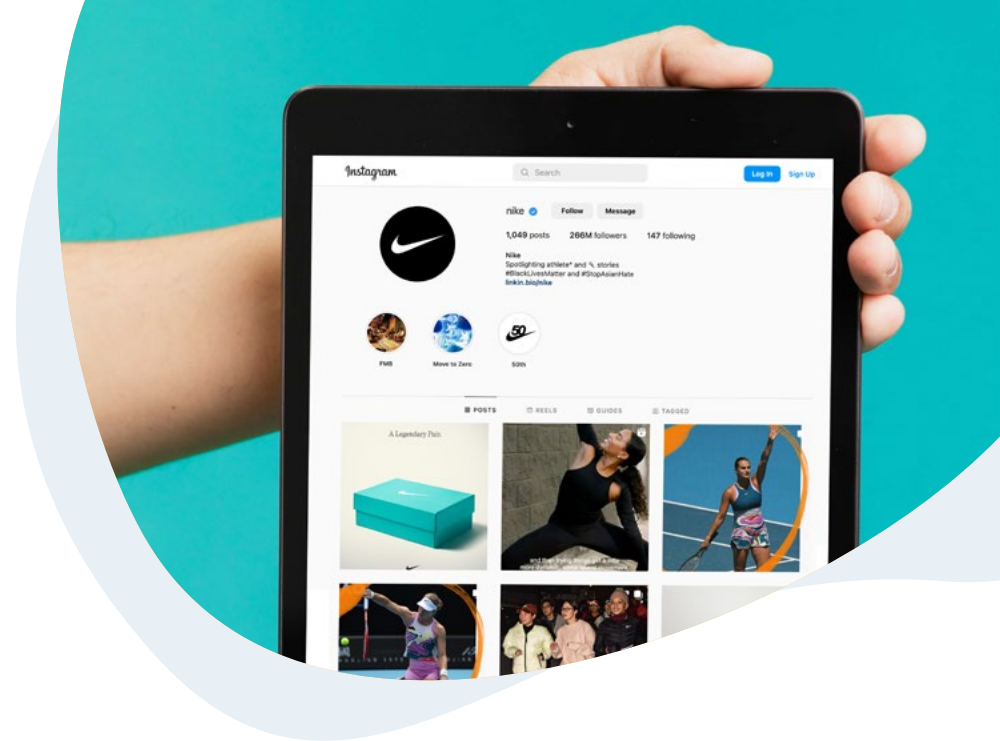
What is Nike doing that's so special? We'll break down some key elements of their Instagram strategy here, including some that might surprise you.

Inspiring, Human-First Storytelling

True to their iconic slogan 'just do it,' Nike is all about empowering, human-centric messaging. People, not products, come first in their content.

Of course, they do talk about products, announcing long-awaited releases and exclusive collabs. But overall, they have a lifestyle, storytelling focus. It's right in their bio, which reads "Spotlighting athlete stories."

This is an example of the "benefits, not features" approach. Nike is about becoming your best self and achieving great things, not about leggings and shoes.



Celebrities and Public Figures

Most of Nike's recent posts feature athletes and public figures, like Naomi Osaka, Virgil Abloh, and model Adwoah Aboah.

And these aren't just pretty pictures. They're telling powerful, personal stories.

Through Nike's Instagram content, we learn about Adwoah Aboah's mental health journey, runner Chris Engel's athletic setbacks, and Virgil Abloh's contributions to sportswear and design.

Multiple Accounts Build Niche Communities

Perhaps the most surprising part of Nike's strategy is that **they run many different Instagram accounts for different areas of their business!**

To complement their central mega-account, they've built many smaller, engaged niche communities. Beyond the main @nike handle, they run @nikewomen, @nikebasketball, @nikerunning, @nikeyoga, and many more.

For a super-large company like Nike, this is likely a more effective way to build community. While most Instagram marketers likely won't want to run multiple accounts, it does demonstrate how powerful a niche, engaged following can be.

Quality over Quantity

Going against some common marketing advice, Nike doesn't post daily. Instead, they post to feed about three times a week, and they're not hyper-active on Stories.

But everything they do post is high-quality, dynamic, and engaging. Nearly all their Instagram content is either a Reel or carousel, and incredible production value makes scrolling their feed feel like you're flipping through a high-end magazine or watching a compelling documentary.

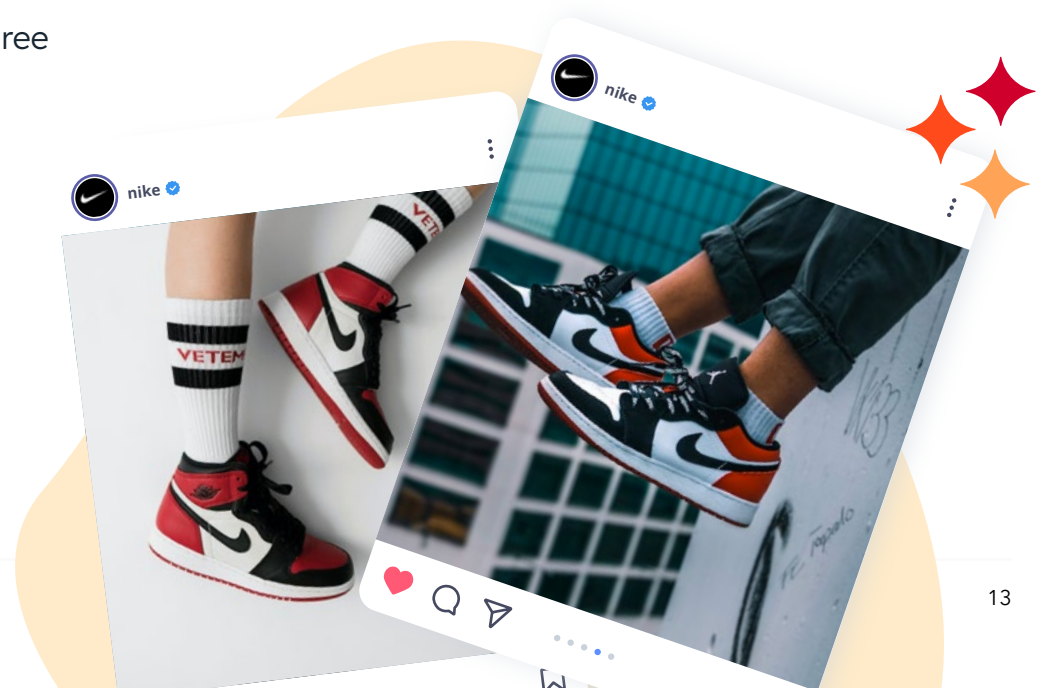
Video-Centric Content

Nike embraces video. Reels make up two-thirds of their content, and they also run multiple YouTube channels. They're also masters of content repurposing. Many of their Reels, such as the Virgil Abloh series, can be found in longer form on their Youtube.

Lead with Their Values

Nike isn't afraid to lead with their values and show customers what they stand for.

The #BlackLivesMatter and #StopAsianHate hashtags are right in their bio, and they've become well known for spotlighting activist athletes like Colin Kaepernick.



Regionally

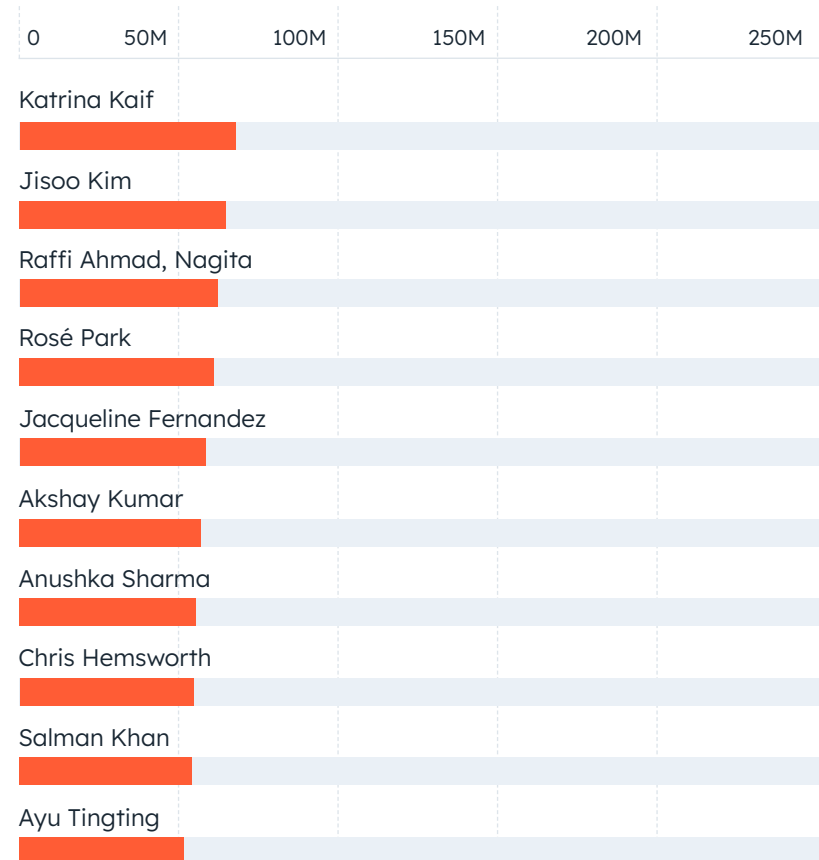
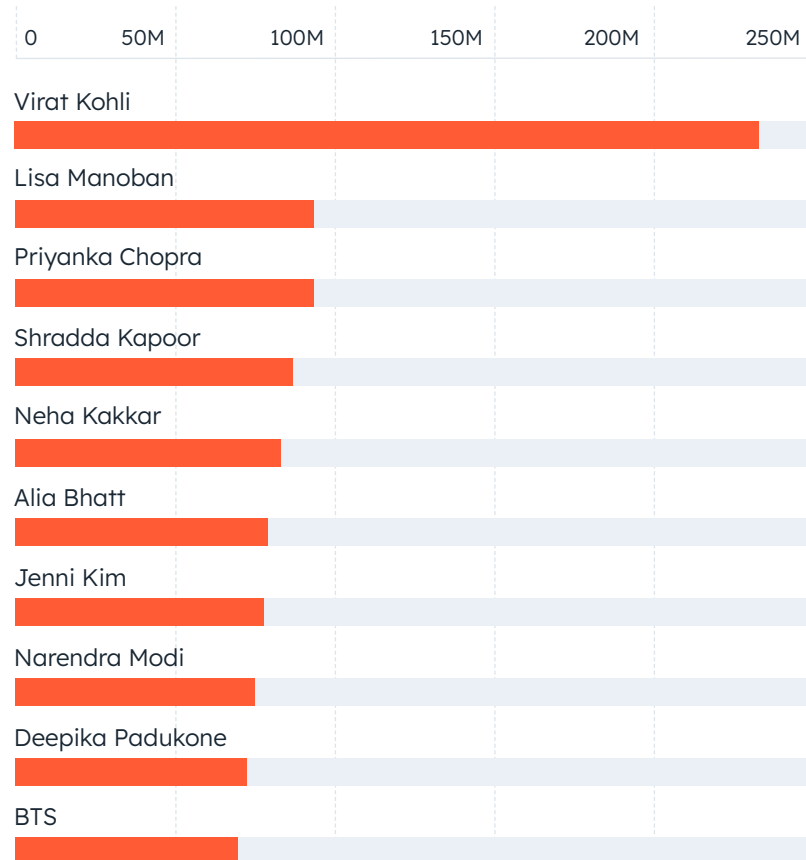
All over the world, people love following singers, actors, footballers and TV stars on Instagram. But the most popular accounts vary hugely in different regions.

Here are the most interesting regional differences we found in the Top 50 most-followed accounts, as well as which types of accounts are most popular.



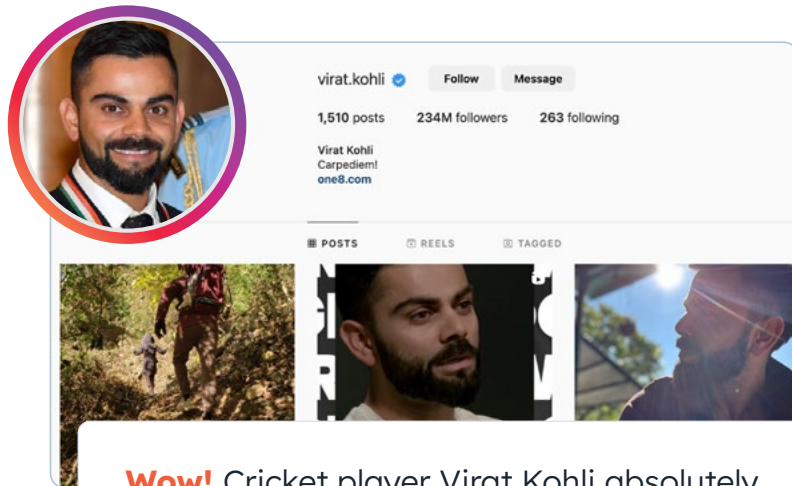
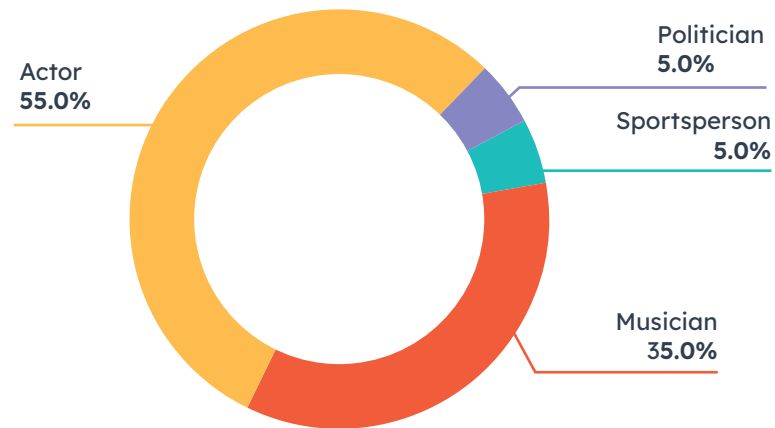
Asia-Pacific

APAC - Followers count vs. full name



Asia-Pacific

Most popular types of account



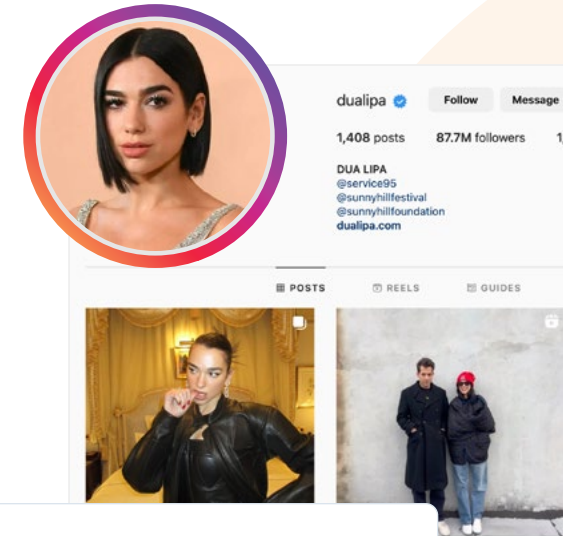
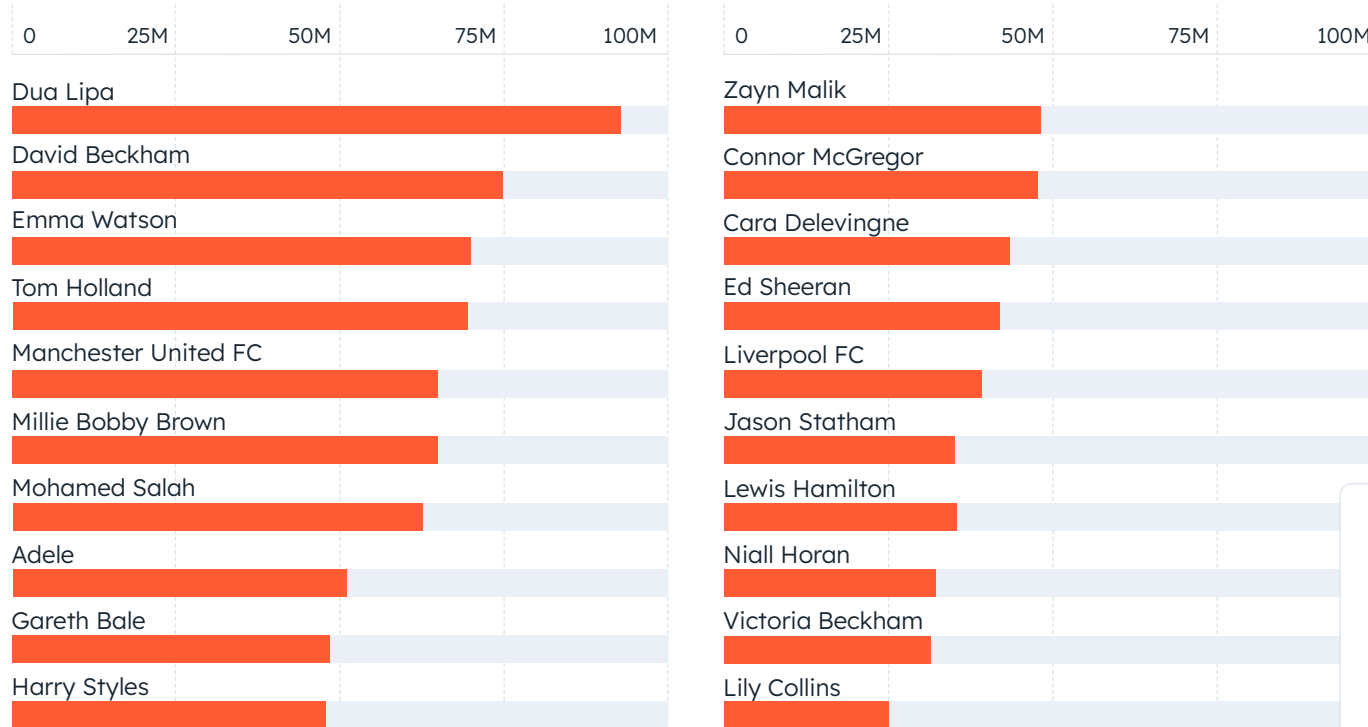
Wow! Cricket player Virat Kohli absolutely dominates the other top accounts in this region.

Kohli was India's highest-paid athlete last year, and he's widely considered to be the greatest cricketer playing today. In 2022, he also returned to playing cricket, rather than captaining India's National Team, and his performance has been heralded as a "return to form."

Interestingly, there are no brands in Asia-Pacific's Top 50. It's all celebrities and public figures. Actors, rather than musicians, were also the most-followed accounts.

UK and Ireland

UK+I - Followers count vs. full name



Dua Lipa is the UK's most followed Instagrammer.
She's also the only Brit in the global top 50!

One big difference from last year is that we're not seeing any news outlets or publishers. The Top 20 is all celebrities and a couple of football clubs.

Have people here moved away from using social media as their virtual newsstand?

Again, there are no brands here beyond football clubs. In both Asia-Pacific and the United Kingdom, brands weren't able to crack the Top 20.

Since public figures are so much more highly followed, it's likely that brands need super-wide, global appeal to stack up against mega-celebrities.



How Do You Stack Up?

The data is clear. A-list celebrities are the top dogs of Instagram. But even if you're not a footballer or a reality TV star, you might still have had a good year.

Nearly all accounts got bigger over the last year. **Twice as many users now have over 100k followers, and virtually everyone has over 100.**

In 2022, here's what engagement and followings looked like on Instagram, so you can benchmark your own accounts.

Highlights

- Half of all Instagram accounts have between 1,000 and 10k followers.
- Larger accounts all saw growth, while those under 1,000 followers declined.
- Content and apps, home and auto, and publishers were the most-followed business categories.
- Geography was the most popular category in Asia-Pacific, while car-related accounts dominated in North America.
- Engagement was slightly up this year and was significantly higher in Asia-Pacific than the UK, Ireland, and North America.



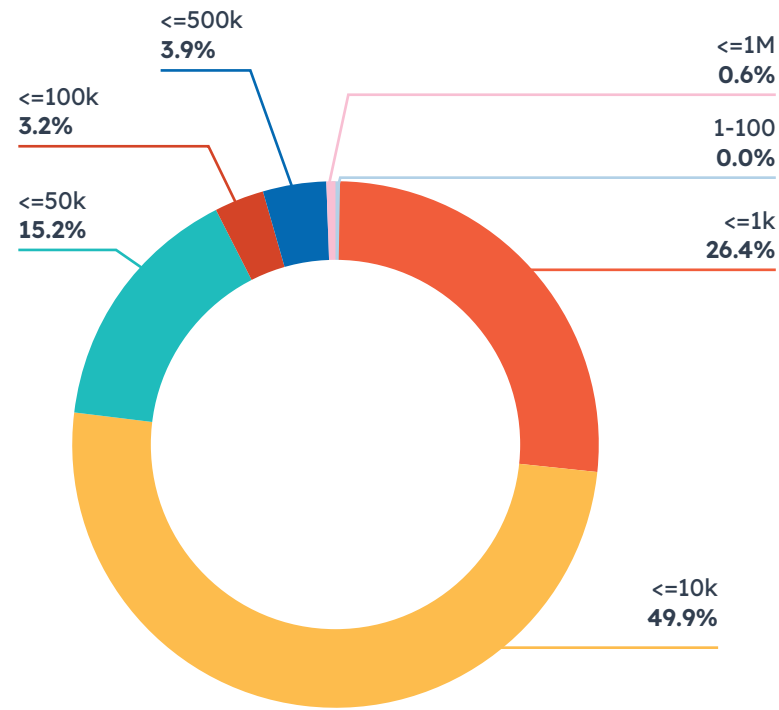
Benchmark Your Followers

So, you've got 10k, 100k, or even 1k followers—great! But what does that actually mean? Within the greater Instagram landscape, is that a lot, or a little?

Here's what follower counts look like across Instagram, so you can get a sense of where you fit in.

Globally

Number of accounts



Just like last year, accounts are growing!

About half of all Instagram accounts now have between 1,000 and 10k followers, a slight jump from last year's data. 26.4% have between 100 and 1,000, which is 9% less than in 2021.

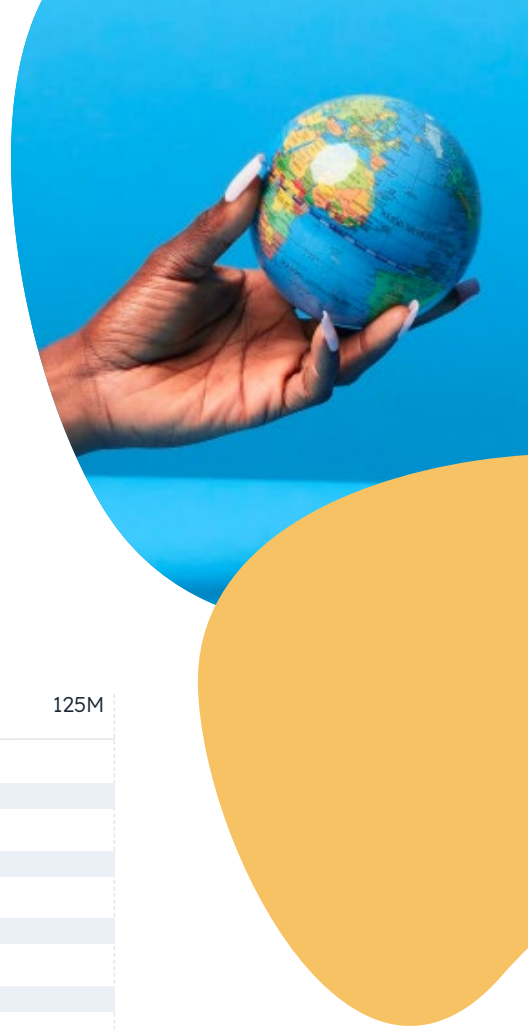
For accounts with large followings, this was a year of growth. 4.5% of accounts had over 100k followers, up from 3.3% in 2021. 22.9% of accounts also had over 10k followers—up from 18.5% in 2021.

Regionally

These trends more or less held true across all the regions we studied.

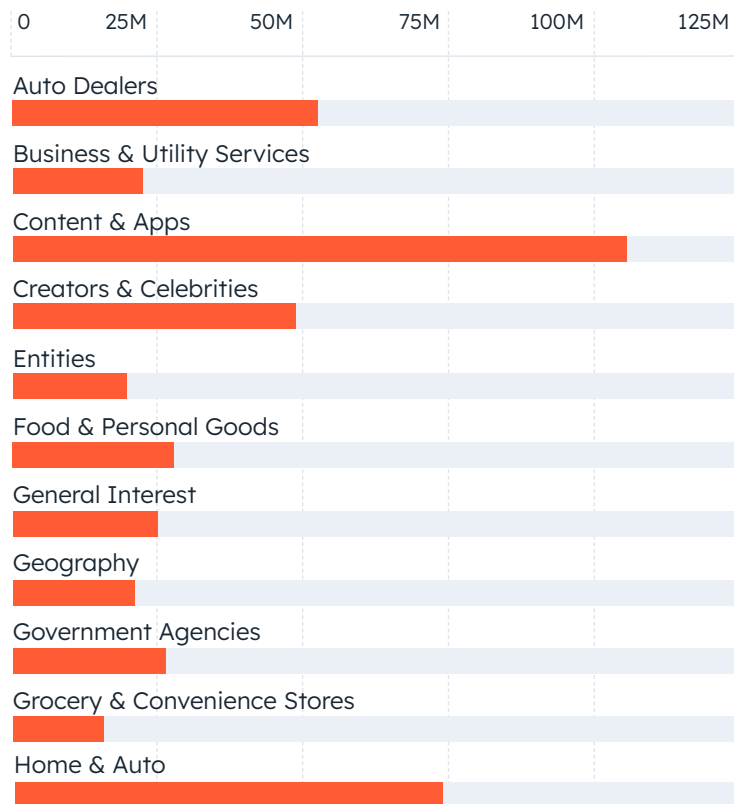
In Asia-Pacific, there are slightly more large accounts, with 50k-100k followers. North America, the UK, and Ireland were home to more mid-sized accounts, with 10k-50k followers.

It's possible that population is playing a role here. After all, many of the world's top 10 most populous countries are in Asia-Pacific, and more people means more users!

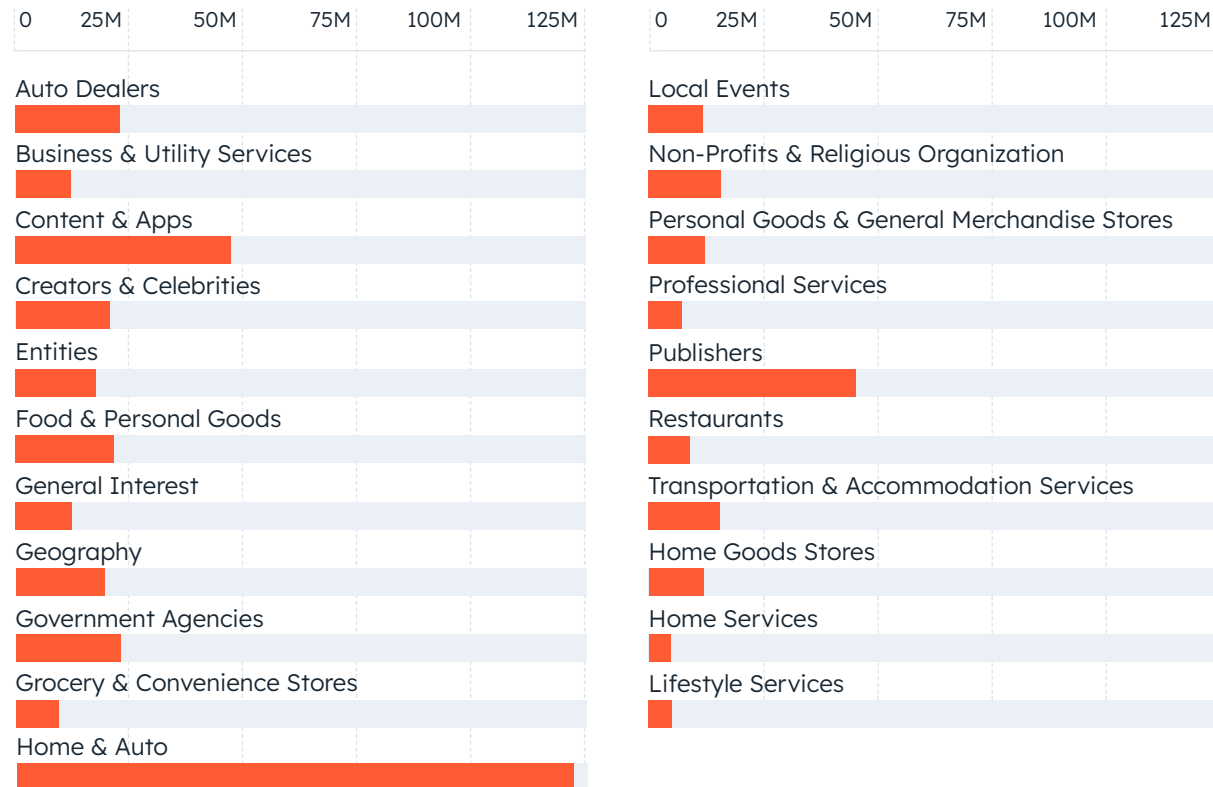


By type of business

Average number of followers vs. business category - 2023



Average number of followers vs. business category - 2022



This is one area where we saw lots of change. It seems like the businesses people keep up with on Instagram have shifted a lot over the last year!

In 2022, people loved following content and apps, home and auto accounts, and publishers. But let's keep in mind that the content and apps category likely contains some similar content to publishers—and that the most popular account of all time, Instagram, is affecting the rankings.

Taken together, the data shows us that people are coming to Instagram for news, whether it's current events generally, or niche updates in a topic they care about.

Home and auto is still a strong contender. But the picture looks very different from last year, when these businesses dominated all the other categories.

This doesn't necessarily mean people don't like car and home content as much anymore. For example, a bunch of new pages could have come on the scene, which are still growing their followers.

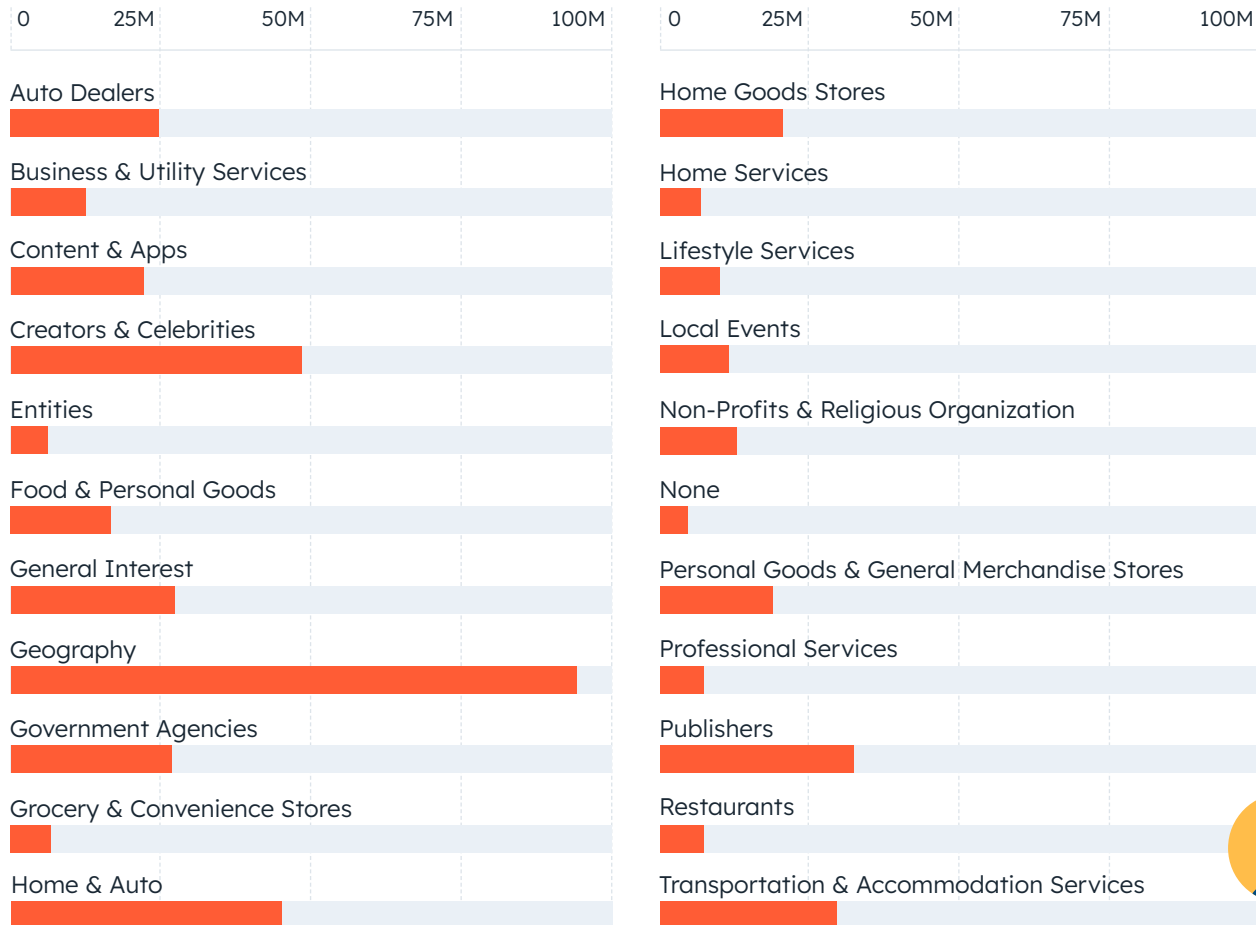


Business Type by Region

Next, let's break down which kinds of businesses were most followed in different parts of the world.

Asia-Pacific

Average follower count vs. business category



Geography, home and auto, and creators and celebrities were the top categories in Asia-Pacific.

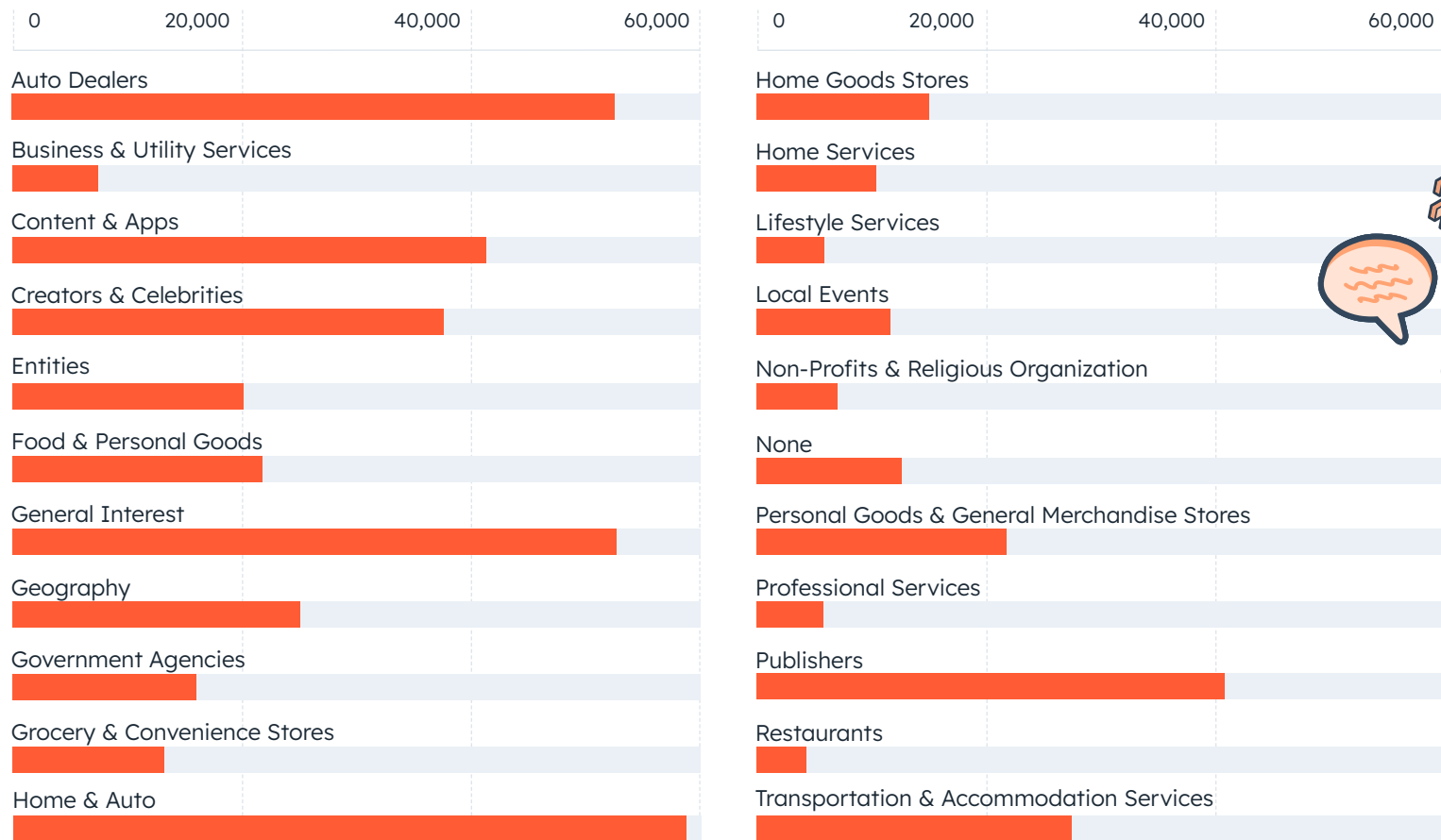
We've already seen that people love using social media to connect with their favorite famous figures in this region—but surprisingly, geography absolutely surpassed every other category!

In many parts of Asia-Pacific, travel opened back up later than the rest of the world. People might have been excited to get some travel inspiration and dream about the world around them!



North America

Average followers count vs. business category



Car culture is going strong in North America, that's for sure!

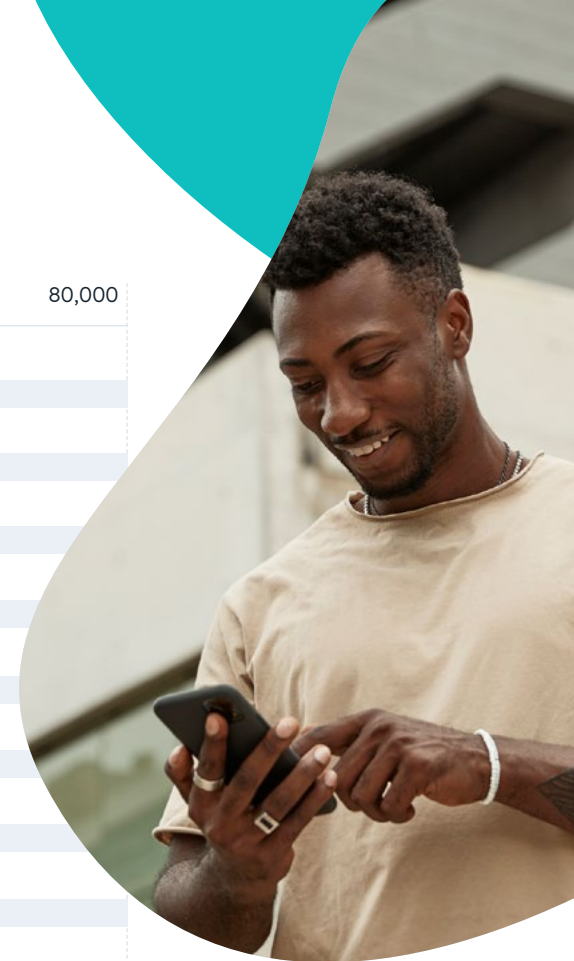
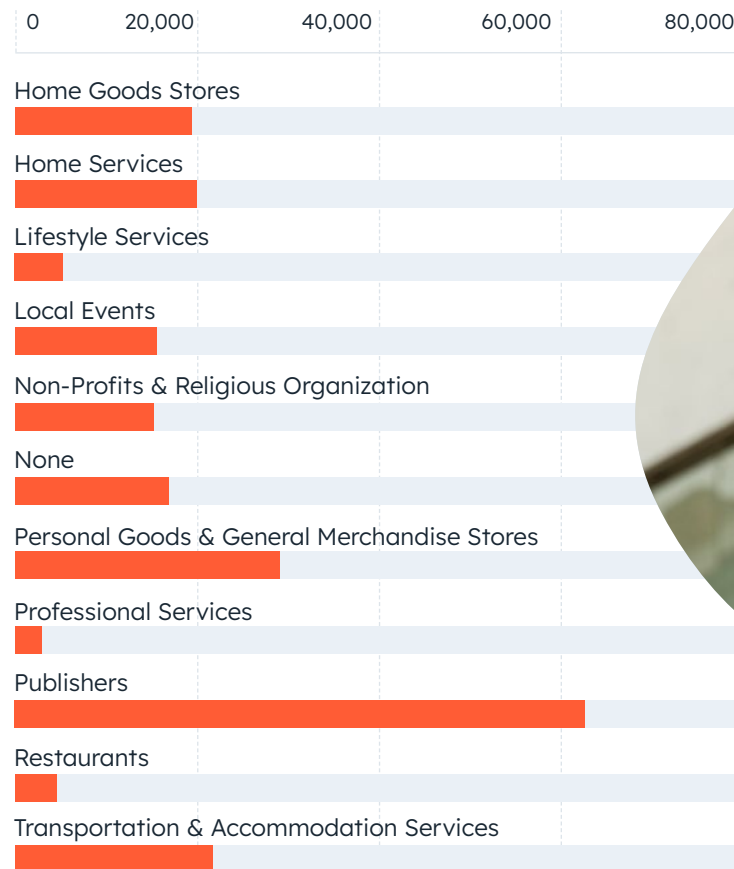
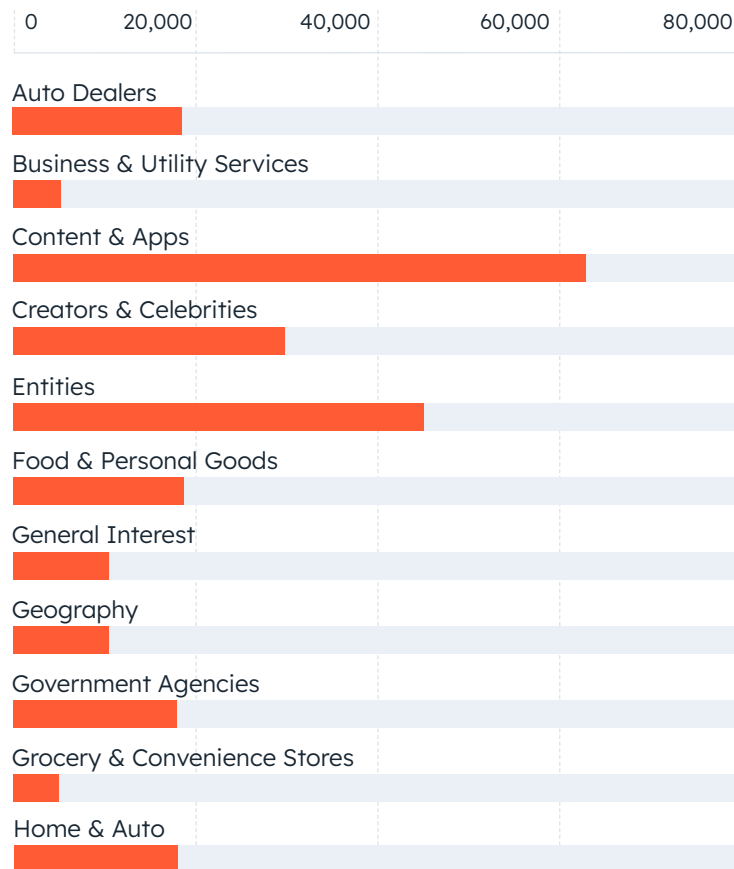
The top categories here were home and auto, general interest, and auto dealers.

Publishers and transportation made strong appearances, too.

With publishers high in the ranking, people do seem to be getting some news from Instagram. The general interest categories likely also includes accounts in specific niches such as news about finance, hunting, or arts.

UK and Ireland

Average followers count vs. business category



Content and apps, personal goods, and entities held the top spots here, with publishers coming in fourth.

It seems like small consumer goods, such as makeup, are more popular follows here than big-ticket items like cars and homes.

Content and apps, like publishers, could also include people keeping up on news.

Tips + Tricks: Does Follower Count Matter?

It might feel discouraging to read about all these mega-accounts. The majority of accounts now have over 1,000 followers. How are you supposed to compete if you're just starting your journey?

But follower count isn't everything. In fact, many people consider it a vanity metric! Having lots of followers might look good, but it's not necessarily getting you closer to your business goals.

Smaller followings can even be better for building trust and relationships. That's why Nike, as we highlighted above, chose to complement its mega-account with multiple smaller ones!

Instead of using follower count as your main KPI, think about what you're actually trying to get out of posting on Instagram. Social media is most often associated with brand awareness, but it can fit into any stage of your sales funnel.

Your Instagram might be:

- Top-of-funnel, helping you build brand awareness
- Mid-funnel, encouraging newsletter signups or offering product demos
- Bottom-of-funnel, helping you close sales

Instagram is so much more than a popularity contest. To branch out, try tactics like:

- Making an Instagram-specific landing page and seeing how many hits it gets, or how many purchases are made through it.
- Offering a specific discount code for Instagram followers and tracking how it's used.
- Using branded hashtags to start conversations among your followers or invite them to share UGC.
- Using social listening tools like [Mention](#) to track what others are saying about your brand.

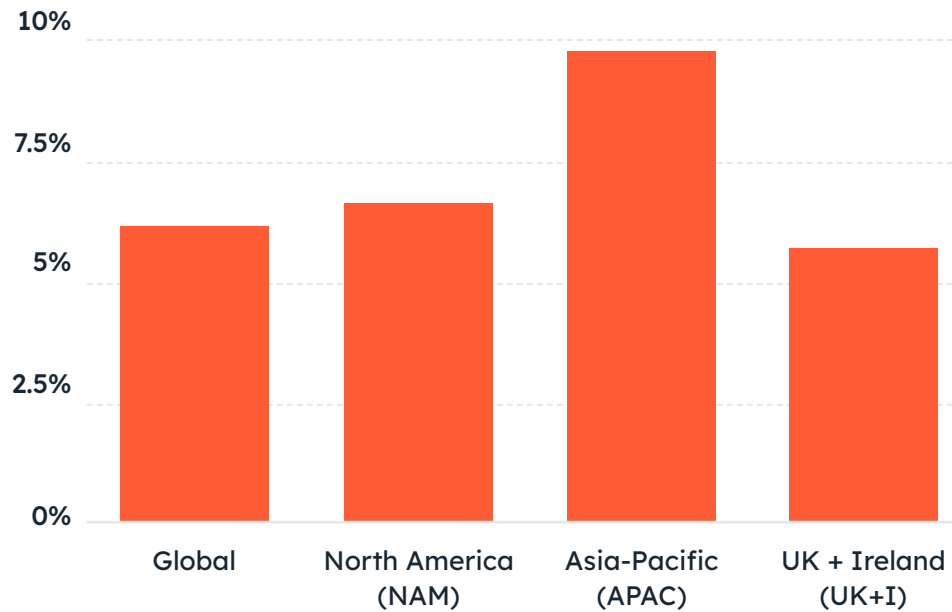
Of course, gaining followers is something to celebrate. Every one of those people is a potential customer or community member! But it's not the end-all, be-all of building your brand on Instagram.



Benchmark Your Engagement

Globally

Average engagement rate vs. region



It's not just followings that are growing. All those users are more engaged on Instagram, too. Last year, global engagement was 6.01%, compared to 5.86% in 2021.

While any improvement is good, that's very different from last year's figures, which more than doubled average engagement the year before! We're not too sure why engagement seems to be leveling out. Maybe people are emphasizing screen time limits and keeping stricter boundaries with their tech?

Regionally

But the regional figures show something interesting. At 9.63%, engagement was much higher in the Asia-Pacific region! Compare that figure to North America at 6.5%, or the UK and Ireland, where it was below average at just 5%.

As we'll further explore throughout this report, our research suggested that social media behavior is much more engagement-heavy in Asian-Pacific countries! Across the board, frequent liking and commenting was the norm, compared to more reserved North American and European users.

In the next section, we'll analyze engagement by what's been posted, instead of where it was tagged from.



What Should You Post on Instagram?

It's always interesting to see which kinds of businesses have the most followers, and which regions' users are most engaged.

But most marketers are wondering how to optimize their content. And since you're pretty stuck with your industry and region, knowing who's on top doesn't really help with that!

So let's dig into what kinds of content performed the best in 2022. Globally and regionally, we'll slice the data by content format, caption length, emoji, and tags.



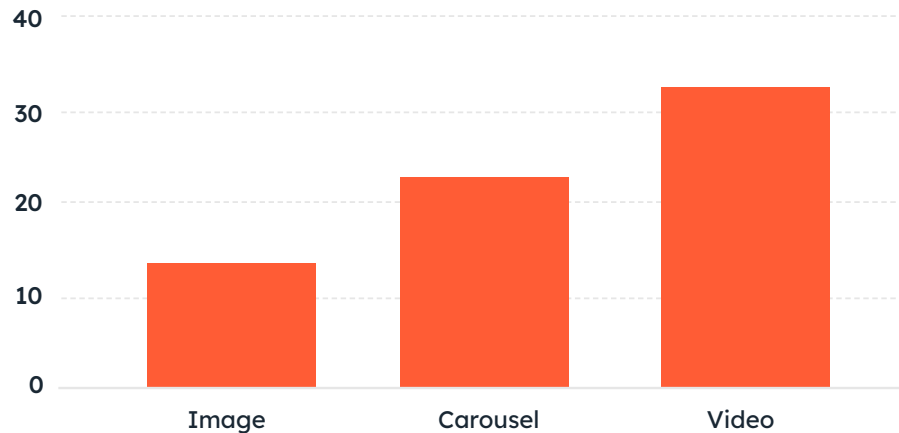
Highlights

- Video is still the most engaging type of content. The trend was even more pronounced in Asia-Pacific, where videos got 800 likes more than the global average.
- Using one to 10 emojis gave posts a small boost in engagement.
- Globally, captions performed best either very long or very short—think less than 20 characters, or over 2,000.
- In Asia-Pacific, captions between 100 and 1,000 characters got the best engagement, while UK and North American data followed the global trend.
- Many of the most engaging hashtags were Reels or video-related.
- Tagging more than 11 other accounts as possible seemed to increase engagement.

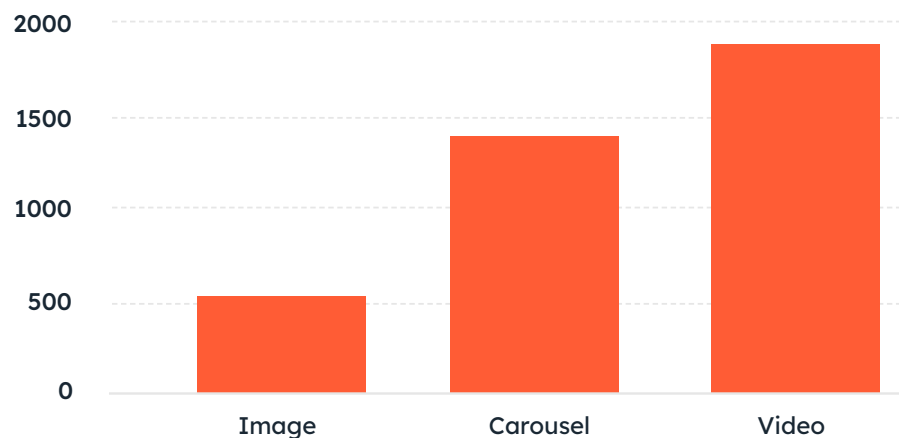
Engagement by Type of Content

Globally

Average Comments vs. Post Type



Average Likes vs. Post Type



No surprises here: Video is still king when it comes to engagement.

Video posts got a staggering three times more engagement than single images and significantly more than carousels.

Part of that is that video actually is more engaging, and users genuinely enjoy it. But we also know that Instagram itself is heavily pushing video, especially Reels.

Carousel posts come next after video, both by volume of comments and volume of likes.

This should be intuitive for most marketers. The more interactive and dynamic your content can be, the better! Users spend longer watching a video or swiping through a carousel than looking at one single image, and that makes it more like to create an emotional reaction.

Tip + Tricks:

10 Tips for Mastering Instagram Video

From Reels to Stories to streaming live, video has become an integral part of Instagram's platform, and we wouldn't have it any other way!

Working with video can be intimidating if you're never done it before. But the best social media video is natural, authentic, and off-the-cuff, so there's really nothing to fear.

Here are our top 10 tips:

- 1 Be authentic, but stay on-brand!**
Instagram videos should feel direct and natural, but remember, you're still speaking as your company, not (necessarily) as yourself.
- 2 Do some (flexible) scripting.**
Every word you say doesn't have to be set in stone. But you'll produce a better video if you have a clear idea of the main points you need to hit.
- 3 Invest in a basic setup.**
Producing Instagram video doesn't need to be expensive, but a simple ring light and tripod will go a long way.
- 4 Jump on trends when it feels right.**
Instagram Reels, especially, are all about having fun with trends! If there's a cute dance or challenge going around, don't be afraid to jump in as long as you aren't crossing any professional boundaries.
- 5 Try Instagram Live's many features.**
Did you know you can tag products in Instagram Live, so viewers can view and buy them right from your stream? You can also request donations to charitable causes, turn commenting on or off, or allow users to buy badges that support your channel.



6

Have fun with stickers and filters.

Whether you're making Stories or Reels, stickers and filters are part of the fun! You can even choose a few different options, and use them on all your videos for a consistent, branded feel.

7

Focus on the first three seconds.

If the first few seconds of your video aren't compelling, users will just scroll away. Spend the most time and energy fine-tuning the beginning of your video.

8

Pay attention to analytics.

This is good advice for all social media, generally. But pay attention to what performs, and do more of that.

9

Make the most of video apps.

You don't need to be an Adobe master to excel at Instagram videos anymore. Try fun video apps like [Canva's free editor](#) to make your videos sparkle.

10

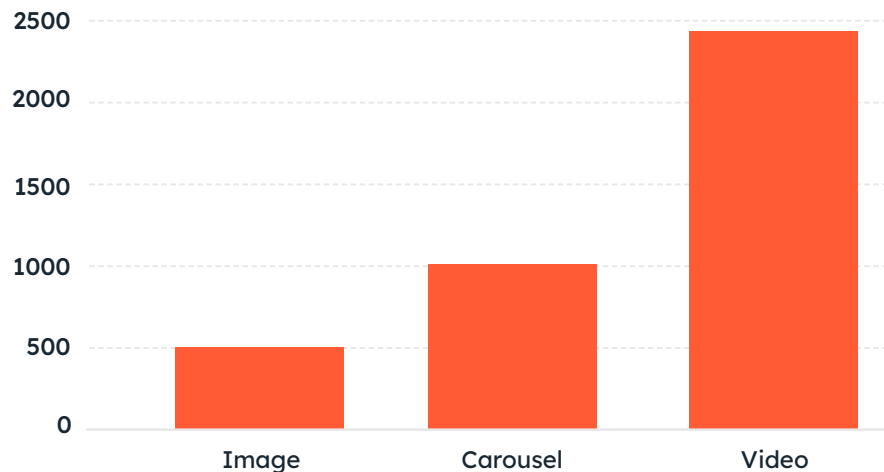
Don't overthink it!

Again, the best Instagram videos feel real and authentic, and a lo-fi aesthetic is totally cool!

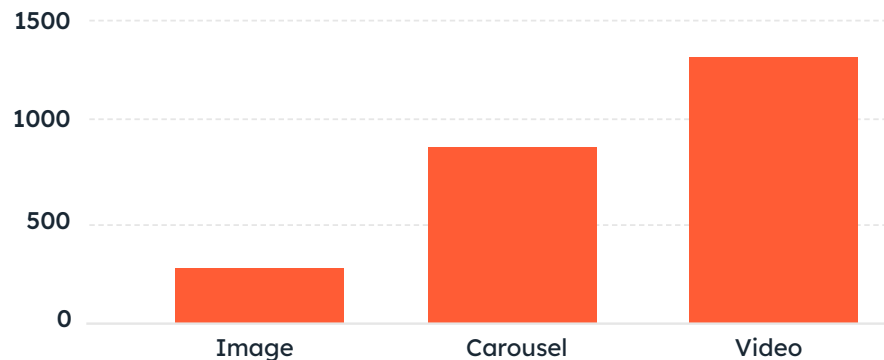


Regionally

APAC - Average Likes vs. Type



UK+I Average Likes vs. Type



The prevalence of video isn't region specific. It applied to all Instagram users, wherever they are in the world.

But just like we mentioned, posts in Asia-Pacific got more engagement in general, and that trend was even more pronounced for videos. **The average video's likes in Asia-Pacific was nearly 800 more than the global average!**

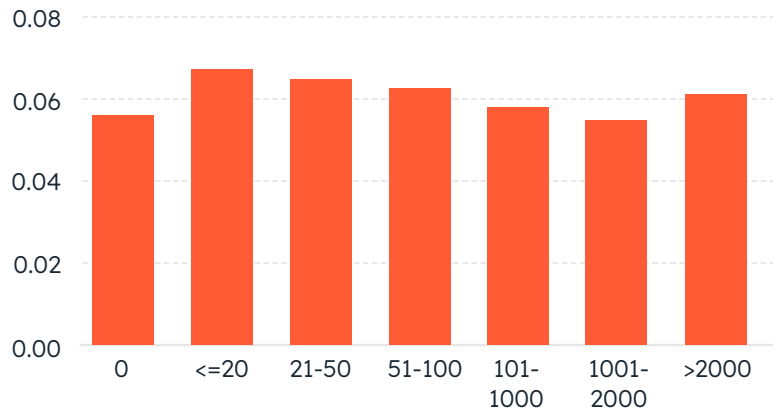
UK and Ireland users showed the opposite behaviors. Videos here got about 300 likes less than the global average.

It seems like online culture in Asia-Pacific is more engagement-heavy, whereas in other regions, people are more reserved.

Engagement by Caption Length

Caption Length Globally

Average Engagement Rate vs. Caption Length



But you should still make sure to say something, as posts without any caption did worst of all.

The popularity of video is likely playing a role here. When you have a whole video to get your point across, you simply don't need a long caption!

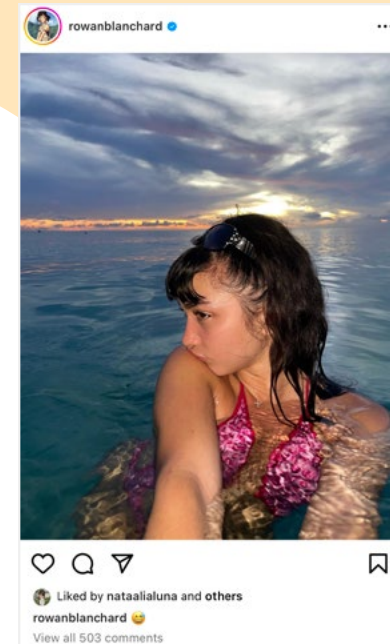
But guess what? Most Instagram users didn't follow this rule! Just 6% of the accounts we analyzed wrote less than 20 characters. Most used medium-length captions, around 101-1000 characters. So if you come up with a fun, quick caption, you'll stand out from the pack.

The takeaway? Either keep it short and fun, or share from the heart and don't hold back!

Just like we saw in 2021, posts with short captions got the best engagement, but there's still a place for long-form storytelling.

Captions between 1 and 20 characters did the best, and the longer they got, the worse the engagement. But that trend reversed with super-long captions! Captions over 2k characters performed nearly as well as those under 20.

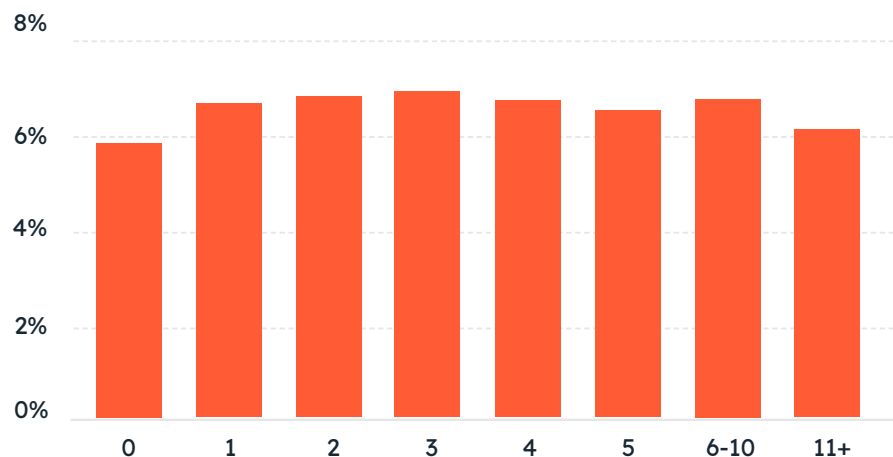
[@rowanblanchard keeps it brief](#)



[Body positivity icon @thebirdspapaya shares from the heart](#)

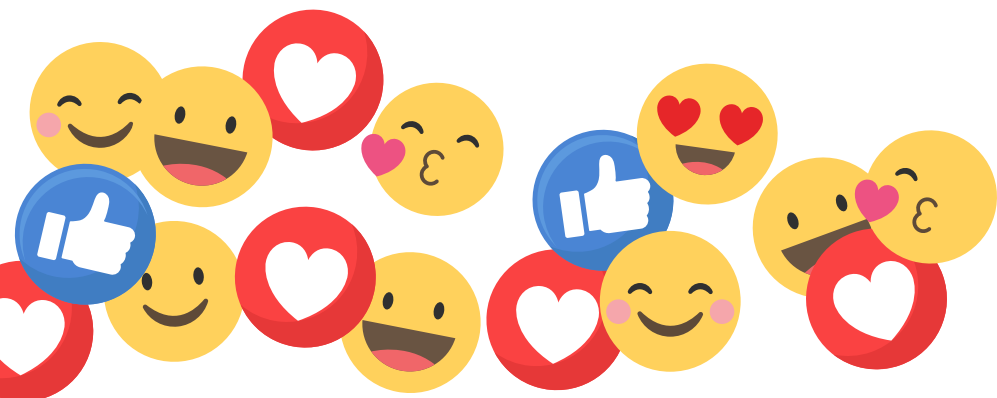
Do Emojis Matter?

Average Engagement Rate vs. Emoji Count



It's okay to have fun with emojis, just don't go crazy!

Posts that used between one and ten emojis did show a small boost in engagement, but the effect dropped off after 11 or more.



@zendaya enhances her message with just two pink emojis



Cluttering your captions with emojis can look a little spammy or chaotic. It also likely fits in with the caption length sweet spot, since if you're using more than 10 emojis, you barely have room left for text.

But don't feel like you need to use emojis in order to fit in on Instagram. Forty percent of the posts we analyzed didn't use any at all, and as you can see, the drop in engagement is less than 1%.

Tips + Tricks: Fun with Captions

Think of your caption as the hot fudge sauce to your post's vanilla ice cream. It's not the main attraction, but it elevates things to a whole new level!

Hmmm... does that make emojis the cherry on top? 🍒

Dessert metaphors aside, here are our tips for a super-yummy caption that will have your audience liking, commenting, and sharing away.

Make the First Few Words Sparkle

The first 125 characters of your caption are crucial. To read anything beyond that, users will need to click "see more." That's less than half a Tweet!

To compete, you've got two options. Make that opener so engaging they can't help but reveal the rest, or go for a short, punchy caption that won't get cut off at all!

Inspire Action

Always inspire some kind of action in your Instagram captions. That could be a classic CTA, which encourages the reader to buy, but your options don't end there.

Try asking readers to sign up for your newsletter, share the post with a friend, or sound off in the comments!



Keep It Real

While you should always stay true to your brand's voice, it's okay for your tone to change on different platforms!

You should sound more casual and conversational on Instagram as compared to, say, LinkedIn, and that's not a bad thing.

Be Concrete and Descriptive

Paint a picture with your Instagram captions. Your goal isn't just to share information. It's to put an image in people's heads!

Instead of "our new rose glitter bath bombs are here," try, "Fragrant, floral, and shimmery, our bath bombs will transport you to a secret rose garden."

Break It Up

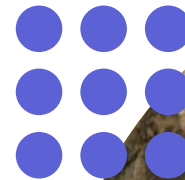
No one likes a wall of text. So if you're going for a long caption, break it up!

This is one good use of emojis. Try using them between sentences, or as paragraph breaks to enhance your message.

Know Your Audience

To write good captions that will get you likes, comments, and shares, it's crucial to know who you're talking to.

For example, devoted hobbyists might want long, informative captions instead of something witty and brief. A Gen Z audience might like quirky humor or specific emojis (as in, not the cry-laughing face 😂).



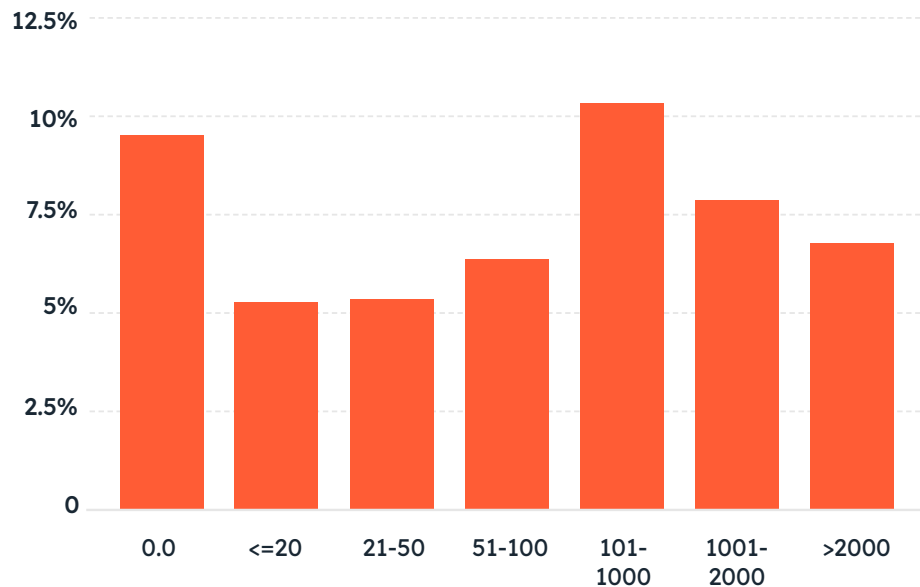
Caption Length by Region

In the regional data, we found even more surprising differences.

Here's how users in Asia-Pacific, North America, and the UK and Ireland prefer their Instagram captions.

Asia-Pacific

APAC - Average Engagement rate vs. Caption Length



Captions

This audience seems to enjoy reading text on Instagram. Posts with captions between 100 and 1,000 characters performed best, although going any longer caused the effect to drop off.

Again, we're seeing that these users want to get pulled into engaging content, and they like to show that enjoyment with plenty of comments and likes.

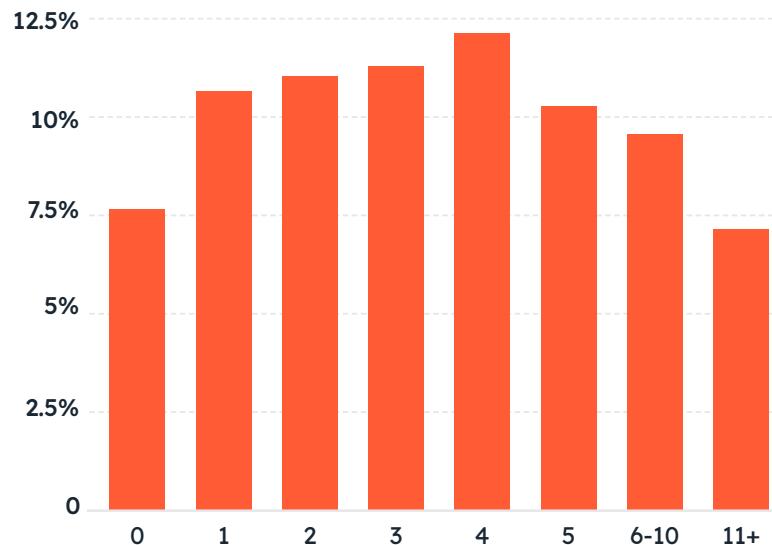
The peaks and valleys on this chart are more dramatic than in the UK and North America. Users in Asia-Pacific seem to be more sensitive to the length of their captions, while their effect elsewhere is not as strong.

One exception was having no caption. It's not as much of a deal breaker in this region, coming in higher than both mid-length or super-long captions. For this audience, either go long, or save your words entirely!



Emojis

APAC - Average Engagement rate vs. Emoji Count

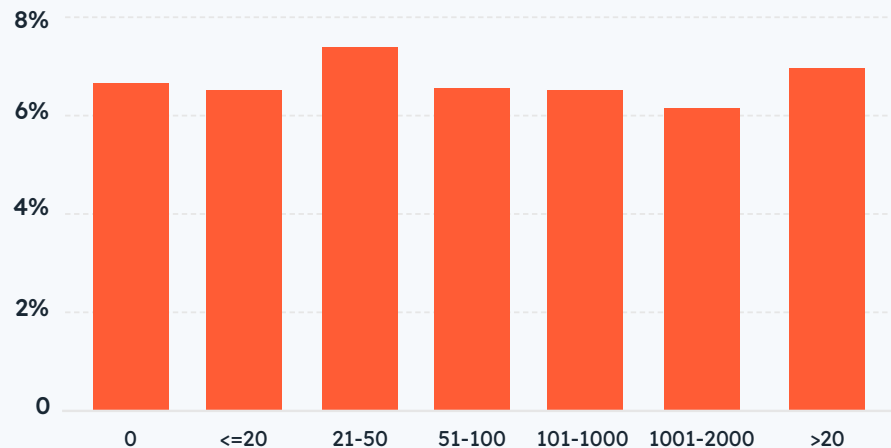


Just like we saw with captions, people are more sensitive to emojis in this region, too. The highs and lows of this chart are more pronounced.

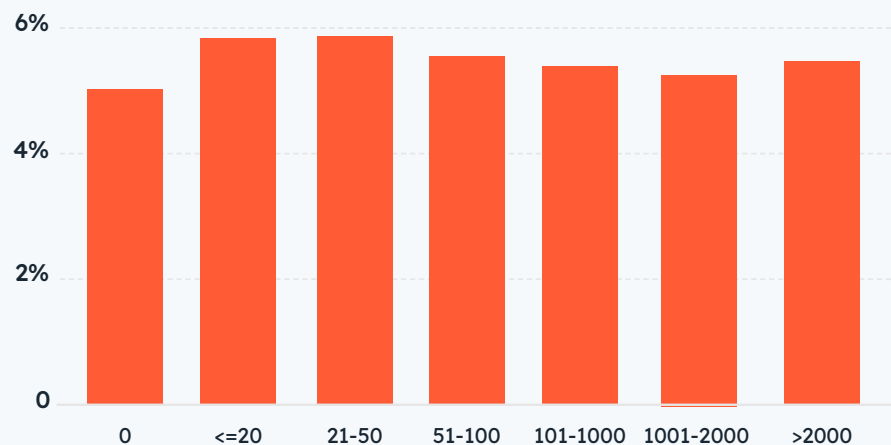
The most engaging posts used at least one emoji, with four emojis as the sweet spot. We saw a dip in engagement on posts that used any more than that.

North America, the UK, and Ireland

NAM - Average Engagement Rate vs. Caption Length



UK-I - Average Engagement Rate vs. Caption Length



Captions

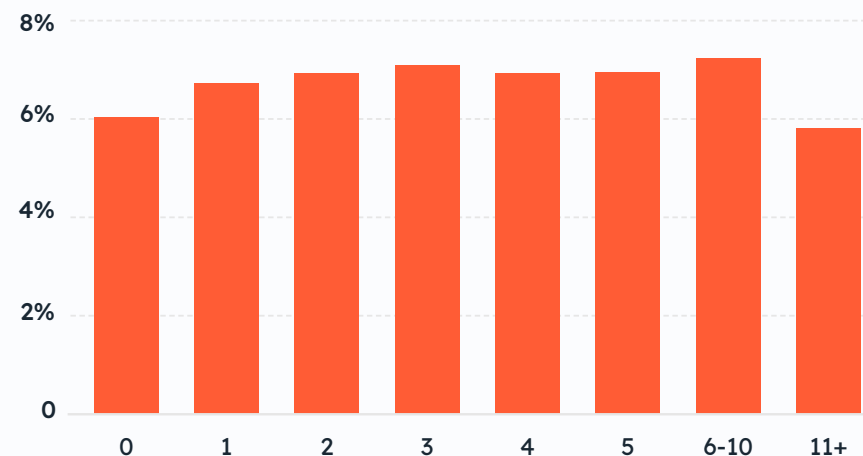
Global trends applied in these regions, as shorter captions were more engaging.

However, shorter really is better here. Even 100 characters was a bit long for these audiences (again, with a small exception for captions over 2k).

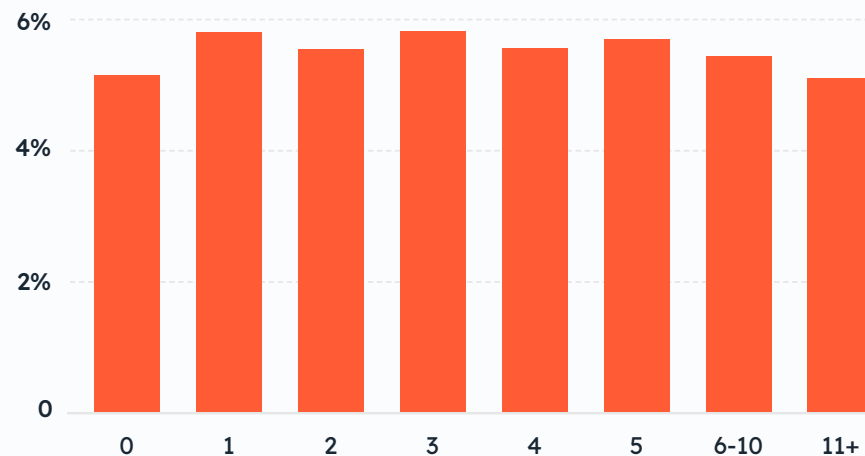
For these English-speaking users, 21-50 characters seems like an ideal sweet spot. Try modeling your Instagram captions after a pithy Tweet, or using just a couple descriptive words.

Emojis

APAC - Average Engagement rate vs. Emoji Count



UK+I - Average Engagement Rate vs. Emoji Count



North American users seem to tolerate up to 10 emojis. In the UK, less really is more—keep it to under 3.

Do you have something to say and big emotions to express? We suggest saying it in video and keeping the caption short and sweet.



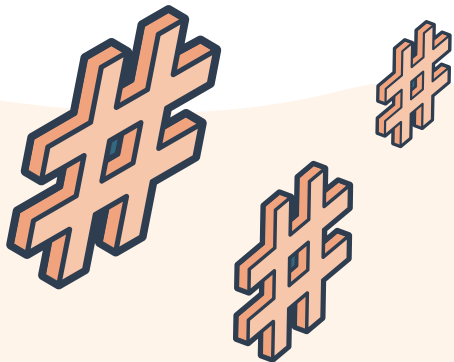
What About Hashtags?

This has been a strange year for hashtags. Some people feel they're a dated strategy that doesn't help engagement or can make your content look spammy. In fact, Instagram itself recommends using no more than 5.

But we found the picture to be more complex than that. And interestingly, **2022's hashtag data reflected the rise of short-form video.**

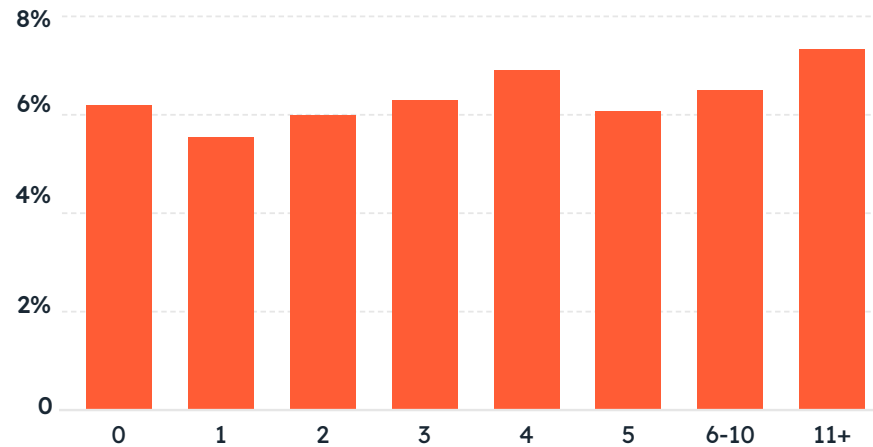
In a bid to compete with TikTok, Instagram has been making Reels a key part of their content strategy. But this year's hashtag data showed us just how powerful this type of content can be.

Reels-related hashtags were among the most engaging, with tags like **#ReelsTrending**, **#FunnyVideos**, and **#FunnyReels** dominating the top 10.



How Many Hashtags Should You Use?

Average Engagement Rate Vs Hashtag Count



Instagram users were using slightly fewer hashtags this year—an average of 7, compared to 8 in 2021.

But that wasn't the optimal amount for engagement! Posts that used over 11 hashtags actually did the best, followed by those that used four. So if you want to make hashtags part of your strategy, your best bet is to fully commit and go hard.

But it's certainly not necessary for success; our guess is that super heavy hashtag users are skewing the average. Most IG posts probably come with way less than seven hashtags, and using none probably isn't a deal breaker.

Hashtags by Volume

In 2022, the top 10 most popular hashtags on Instagram were:

#photography	#instagood
#love	#photooftheday
#art	#reels
#fashion	#travel
#music	#model

With the possible exception of #reels, these are all super-classic, standby hashtags. But for savvy marketers, this might be a better lesson in what not to use.

Every single second, thousands of posts are being shared under these hashtags. Using them won't help you stand out, nor will it reach users in your unique niche.

Hashtags by Engagement

Rank	Hashtags	Rank	Hashtags
1	reelstrending	1	funnyreels
2	calisthenics	2	foodreels
3	funnyvideos	3	funnyvideos
4	funnyreels	4	reelkarofeelkaro
5	boss	5	bappa
6	boys	6	ganpati
7	jump	7	reelsindia
8	reelsindia	8	ganeshchaturthi
9	catlovers	9	ganpatibappamorya
10	viralreels	10	reelitfeelit

#Reels popping up in the Top 10 isn't an accident. In fact, it confirms something we already knew. In 2022, Instagram pushed short-form video hard, and marketers everywhere jumped on the trend in the name of engagement.

Sorted by both engagement and engagement rate, over half of the 10 most engaging hashtags were Reels or short video-related. Reels (and short-form video) certainly seems to have worked for creators in 2022!

It remains to be seen if the effect will continue should Instagram stop giving this content priority. But overall, short-form videos aren't going away. Just call it the TikTok-ification of social!

Tips + Tricks: Make Hashtags Work for You

Figuring out your hashtag strategy can be confusing. Choose tags that are too popular (#love), and your posts will get lost in a sea of spam. But go too niche (#narwhalsofinstagram?), and they might not be seen by anyone!

We recommend using a few different types of hashtags at varying levels of popularity. Mid-sized hashtags, with between 10k and 200k posts, will often get you the best engagement.

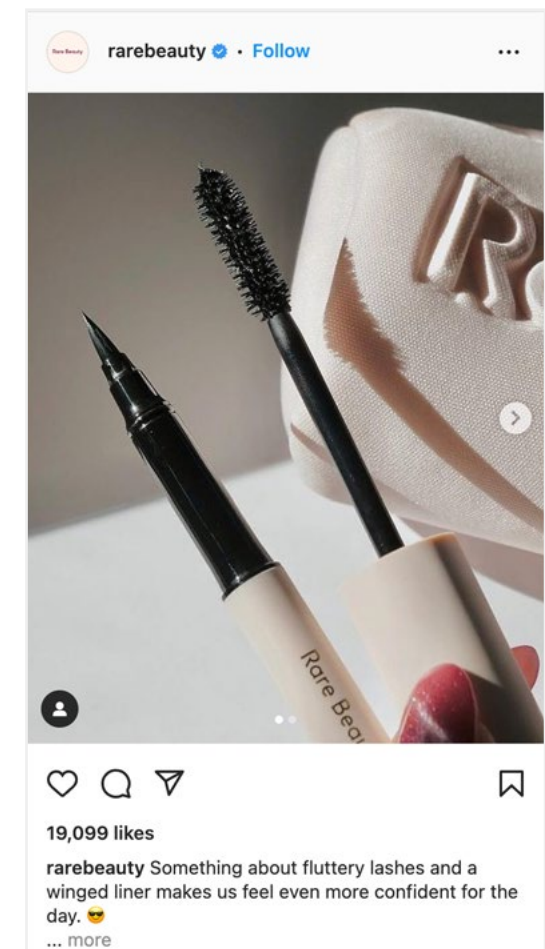
But you can also throw in super-specific tags, like your own branded ones, and maybe some more popular hashtags if they're an especially good fit.

Hashtag Categories

There are five main types of hashtags, and all of them can have a place in your captions.

- Location: #London, #VisitPortugal, #ExploreBC
- Branded: #AbsolutVodka, #GotMilk, #NikeByYou
- Niche or industry: #HomeCooks, #MakeupLovers, #AviationGeek
- Communities and fandoms: #Arianators, #LakersNation
- Descriptive: #Eyeshadow, #KitchenDesign, #FallTrends

@rarebeauty keeps it simple with just one branded hashtag

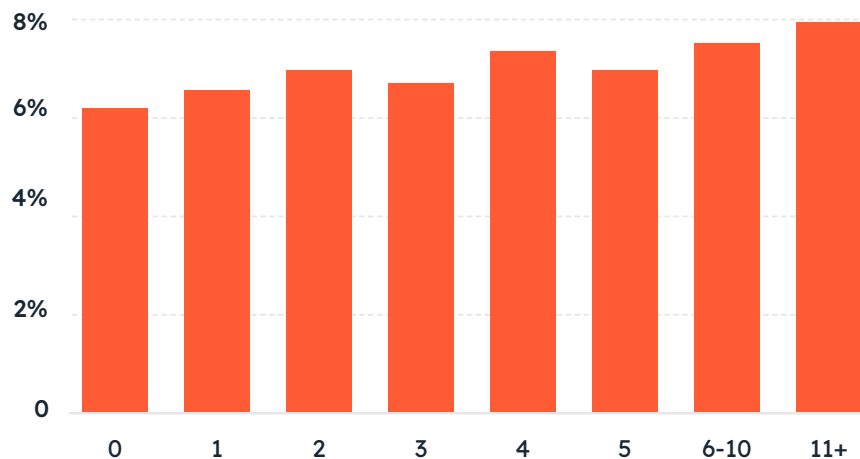


If you like, you can do hashtag research manually by poking around in Instagram's own search and explore page. Try looking up pages you admire in your niche and checking out what hashtags they're using. Do any of them seem fairly active, but still low-competition?

Or, get ideas faster with a hashtag generator [like Mention's](#). You'll enter your post's topic and get a list of possible tags. Pick and choose as many as you want, or supplement them with brand or campaign-specific hashtags of your own.

Post Tags

Average Engagement Rate vs. Tags Count



If you want eyes on your content, tagging other users is a great way to get there.

Tagging more people will get you more engagement. That makes sense, since your post is showing up on their profile, too. And it truly is the more the merrier! There's no drop-off, with posts that tagged over 11 people showing the highest engagement.

Obviously, you don't want to be spammy. Only tag people that are relevant to the content, or ideally, who you actually worked with on it.

This is why collaborating, whether with other brands or influencers in your niche, is such a powerful strategy. Not only are you tagging other users, but they're people your followers will likely care about, who are actively involved in your content.



How Does Timing Affect Engagement?

If you're wondering when to post on Instagram, the answer is simple. Share when your audience is online!

You want your content to get engagement right away, as that will prompt the algorithm to keep pushing it into more users' feeds.

Here's the global and regional trends around post timing and engagement. But remember that the answer for your audience might vary, so keep careful watch of how content performs when you post it at different times.

Highlights

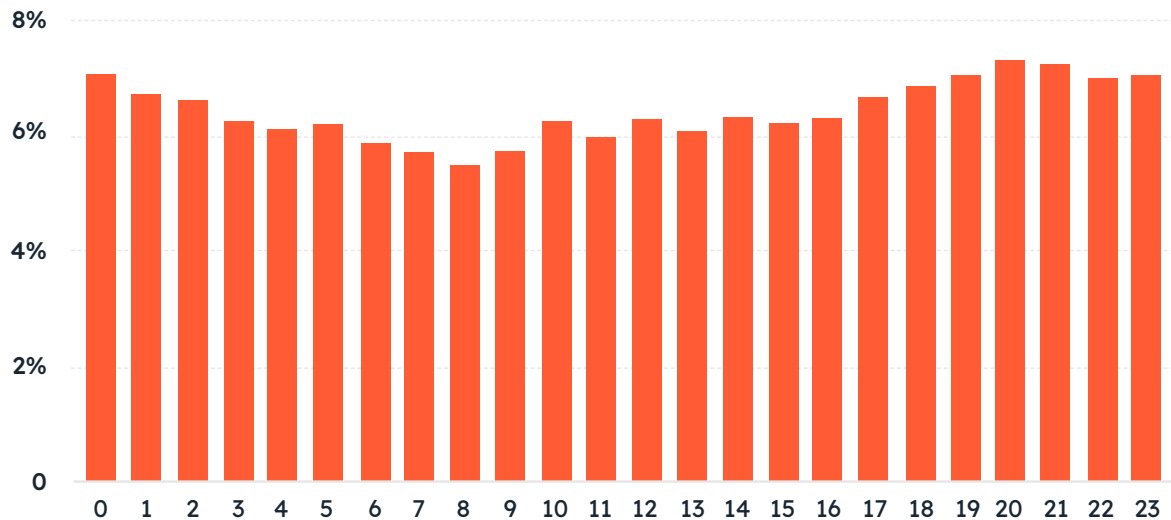
- Evenings (around 8 p.m.) and weekends remain the most engaging time to post.
- Globally, there was more late-night engagement than before.
- Tuesdays, not the weekend, was the most engaging time to post in Asia-Pacific, and the gap between peak and bottom engagement was three times larger.
- North American engagement spiked at 9 p.m. but otherwise wasn't as dependent on time and day.
- UK and Ireland engagement was highest around 2 a.m. on the weekends.



Globally

Time of day

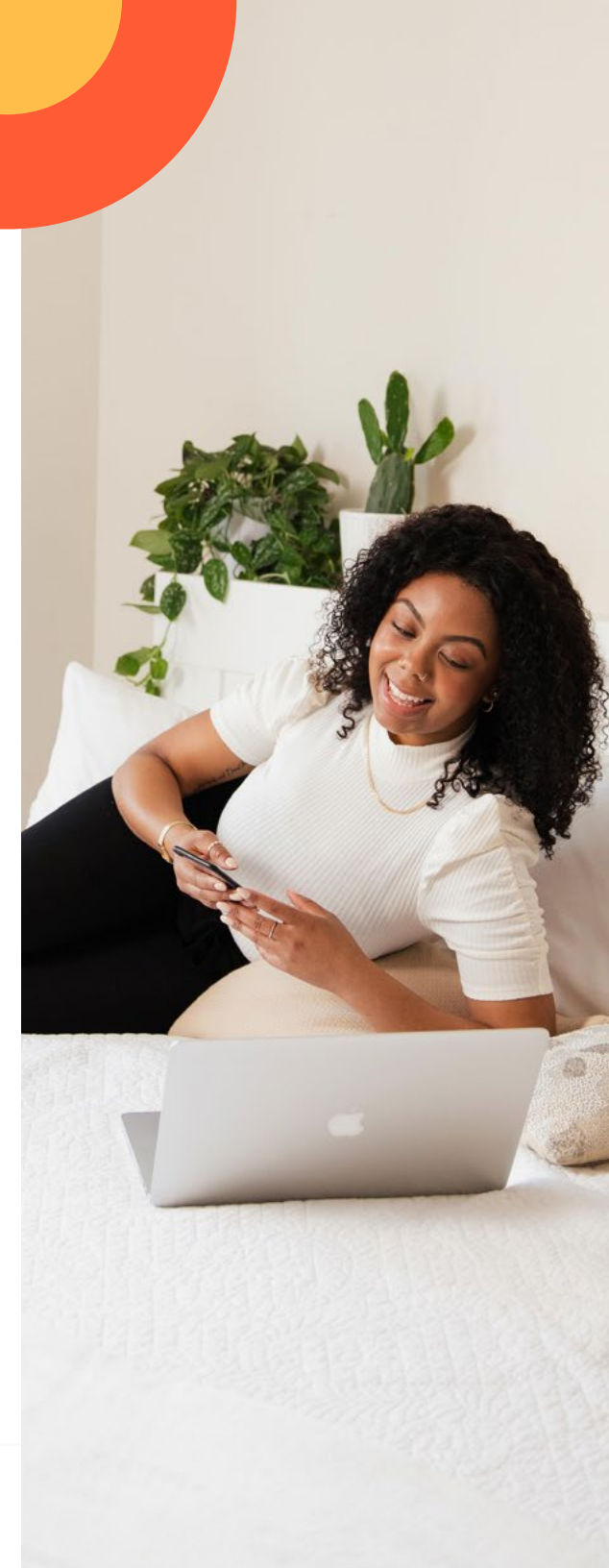
Average Engagement Rate vs. Hour Posted



The general trend is the same as last year. People are more likely to engage on Instagram at night. Just like it was in 2021, **8 p.m. is the prime time to post!**

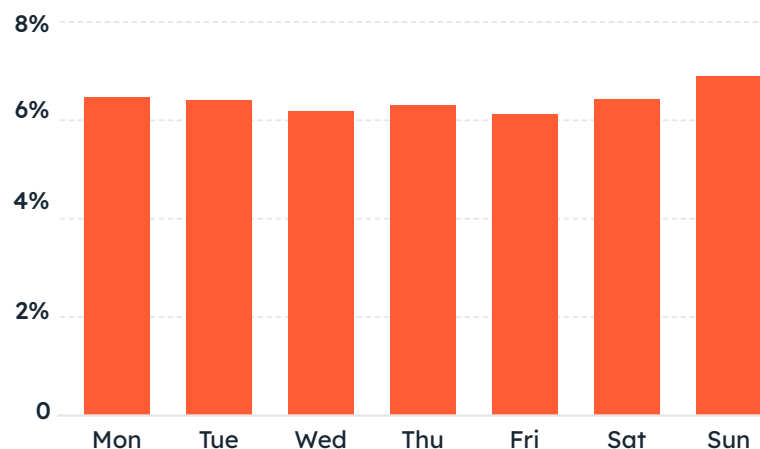
However, we did see some slight shifts in the data. Users are engaging later, with more liking and commenting happening around midnight. Overall, engagement at all times is up. That's good news for marketers... but maybe not for the sleep of everyone scrolling before bed.

There's also a bigger difference between the highest engagement rates (7.33% at 8 p.m.) and the lowest (5.53% at 8 a.m.). While it's still only a gap of 2.2%, every like, share, and comment matters, so pay attention to the time of day!



Day of Week

Average Engagement Rate vs. Day Posted



Unsurprisingly, posts shared on the weekend got slightly higher engagement. But the difference is pretty slight.

From these figures, there's really no bad day to post, so the best bet is to share daily and pay attention to when your audience is online.

Posting manually every day would probably drive you crazy, so we recommend a good social media scheduling tool. Instead of taking time out of every workday (and even the weekends), you can batch out multiple posts at once across platforms.

[Mention's Publish](#) tool lets you schedule and monitor social media all in one place, no matter how many clients and accounts you're running.



Regionally

Asia-Pacific

While engagement is, again, higher here overall, the gap between high and low engagement was much larger than in other regions.

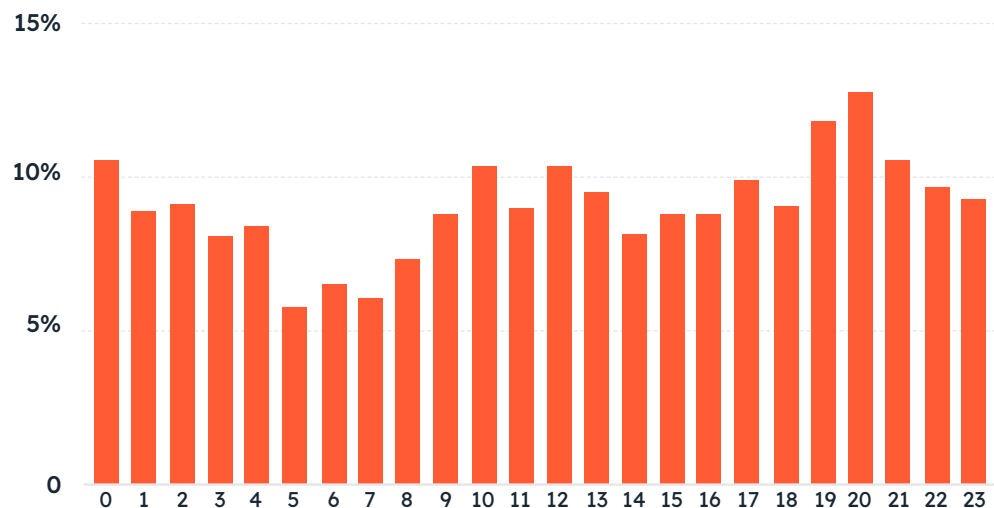
This is reminiscent of engagement stats we saw in Asia-Pacific by other metrics, like caption length and emoji use.

The takeaway? Engagement in APAC is higher, but it's also much more sensitive to what's being shared, and when it's posted.

Marketers focused on this audience need to be very conscious of their customers' usage patterns and preferences.

Time of day

APAC - Average Engagement Rate vs. Hour Posted



In APAC, 8 p.m. still reigns as the best time to post. Content shared at this time got a 12.8% engagement rate, which was 7% higher than the lowest of 5.8% at 5 a.m.

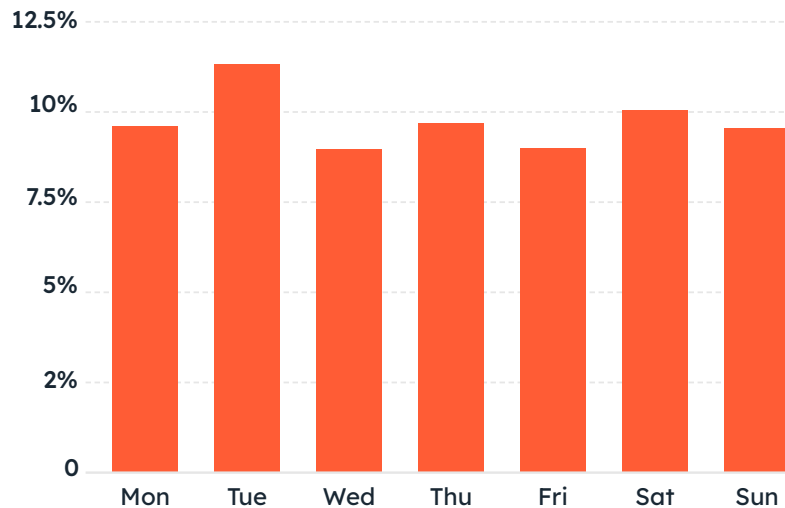
That's **over triple the gap we saw in the global data!** So if you're sharing for an APAC audience, definitely pay attention to the time of day you're posting.

However, you do have options beyond evening posts. Lunch break scrolling seems to be popular here, with a slight spike in engagement to 10.3% around noon.



Day of Week

APAC - Average Engagement Rate vs. Day Posted

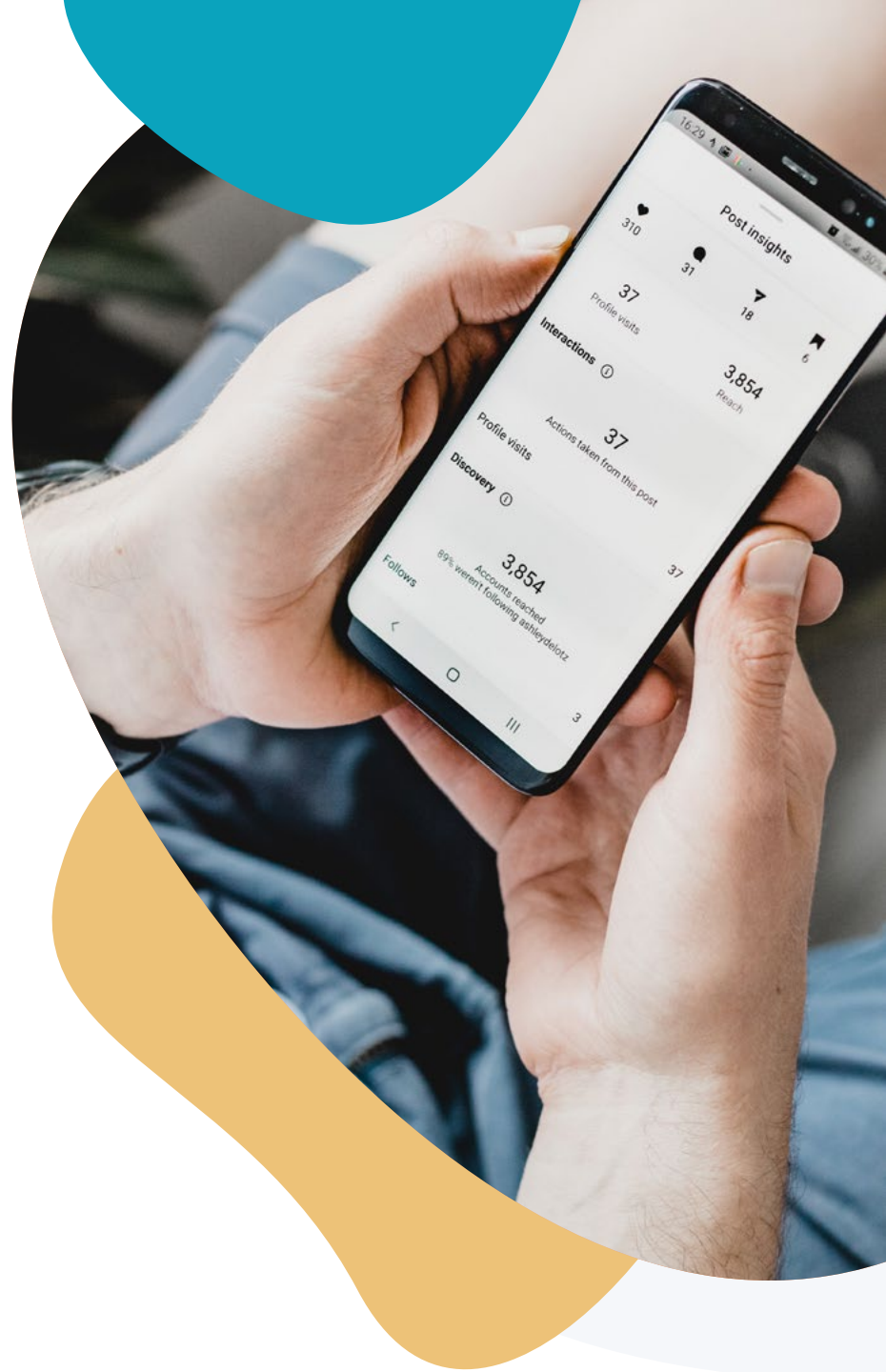


The week, by engagement, looks different here too.

Tuesday, not the weekend, did best with 11.54%, and the high-low gap is again more dramatic with the low of Wednesday clocking in at 8.68%. However, Saturday was the runner-up with 10.03%, so weekend posts aren't exactly a no-no.

This data shouldn't discourage marketers from posting daily, but it's still a valuable guideline.

For example, you might save an extra-important post for Tuesday. Or if you're posting only three times a week, you could make sure to hit Tuesday and Saturday.

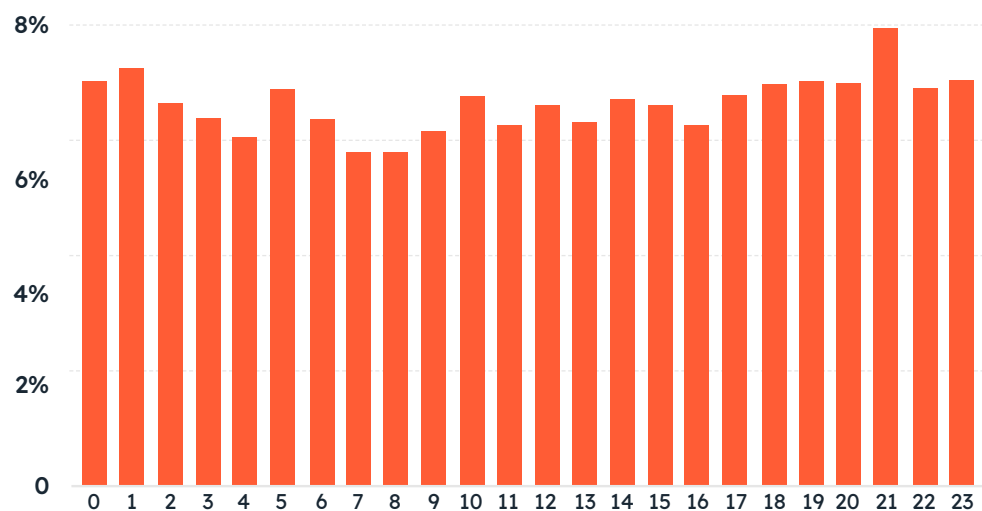


North America

In North America, time-based engagement held pretty true to the global trends. Similarly to last year, this audience seems less sensitive to time and day. You could almost say they're liking and commenting all the time!

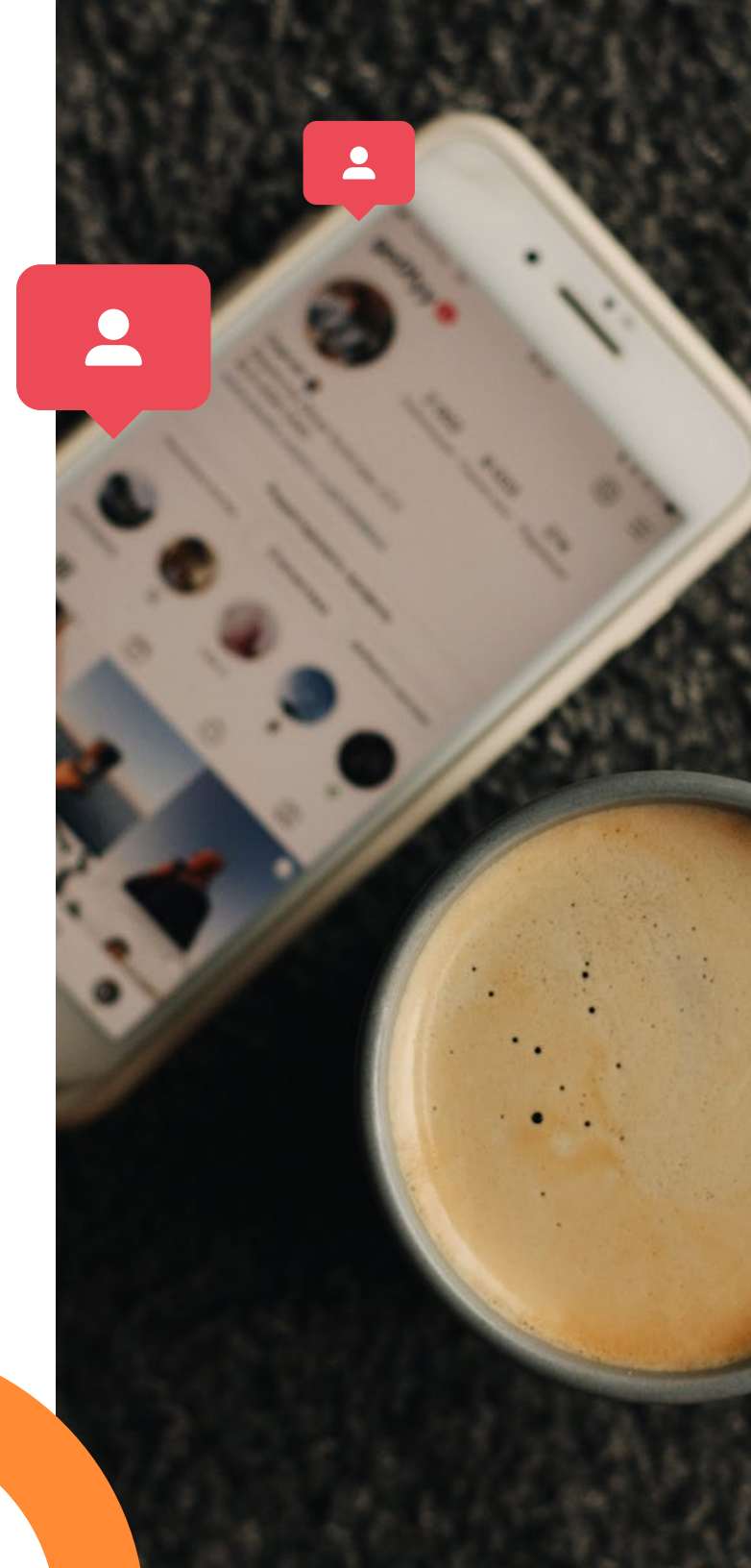
Time of day

NAM - Average Engagement Rate vs. Hour Posted



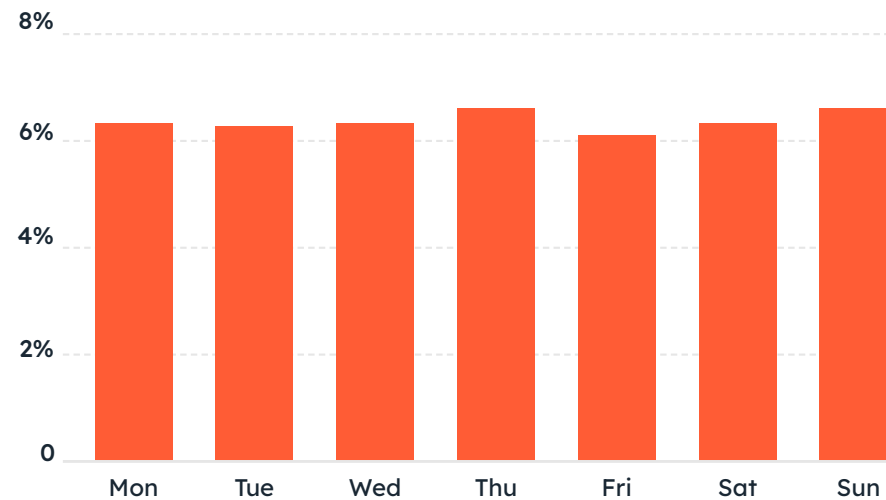
Just like we saw in the rest of the data, evenings are best for engagement. There's a big spike around 9 p.m., but anytime from 6 p.m. to midnight seemed to do well.

If you're targeting North Americans, but not exclusively, you could always post at 8:30 to reach both these users and a global audience.



Day of Week

NAM - Average Engagement Rate vs. Day Posted



In North America, days of the week were very consistent. There are two peaks of about 6.7% on Thursday and Saturday, but it's pretty minor. The low of 6.18% on Friday represents just half a percent's drop.

So don't hold back with the daily posting here! North American Instagrammers seem happy to like, comment, and share, no matter the day of the week.



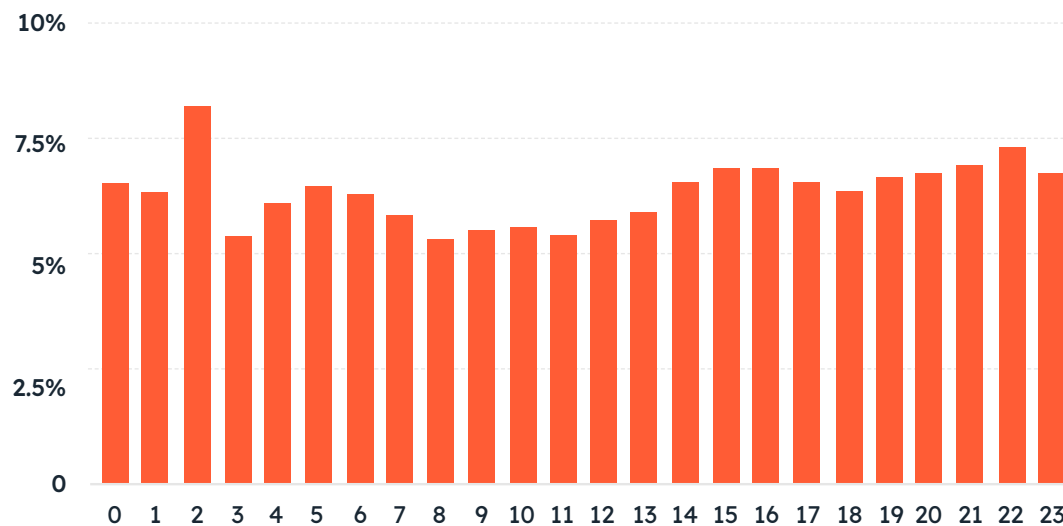
UK and Ireland

Late night, weekend engagement is the name of the game here. It might seem foolish to post your brand's content at 11p.m. or later on a weekend, but that's when a huge chunk of the UK's already-low engagement happens.

The takeaway? If you're targeting a UK or Irish audience, don't be afraid to experiment with some nocturnal posting times! You might get some great results, and you can use a social media scheduler to publish long after you've logged out of work.

Time of day

UK+I - Average Engagement Rate vs Hour Posted



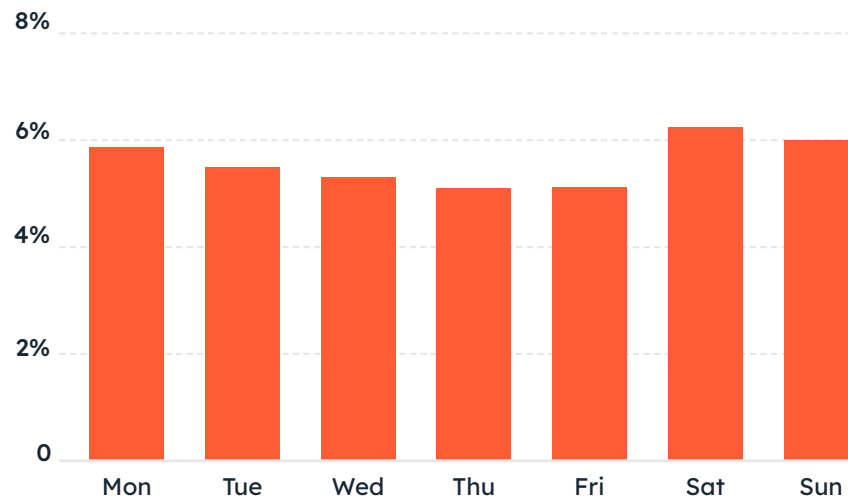
Wow, UK users sure stay up late! **The highest engagement here was 8.24% at two in the morning**, followed by 7.41% at 10 p.m. Last year, the peak was 5 p.m.. Brits, are you getting your beauty rest?

Avoid morning posts with this audience—performance was low from 3 a.m. until 11 a.m.

Things start to pick up around noon, but they don't really get going until 4 p.m.... unsurprisingly, for a bunch of Instagram night owls!

Day of Week

UK+I - Average Engagement Rate vs Day Posted



Weekends are key with this audience. Saturday comes first at 6.19%, and Sunday's not far behind with 5.92%.

Weekday engagement is strongest on Mondays and then tapers off. But because people are engaging so late, plenty of Monday and Saturday's engagement is really Sunday's late-night scrolling.

At the risk of stereotyping, could people be scrolling away (and feeling extra like-happy) after a night out?



Where In the World are Instagram Users?

Instagram's users are all over the world, but some regions are way more active than others!

Let's dig deep into geotags. Where are people choosing to tag their posts? How does that tagged location affect engagement?

As you read this section, keep in mind that just because a post is tagged somewhere, doesn't mean that's where the poster actually is. Users might be tagging famous cities and tourist centers in hopes that it will give their content greater reach. But because a geotagged post is aimed at users in that area, it can still give us valuable insights into how they behave.

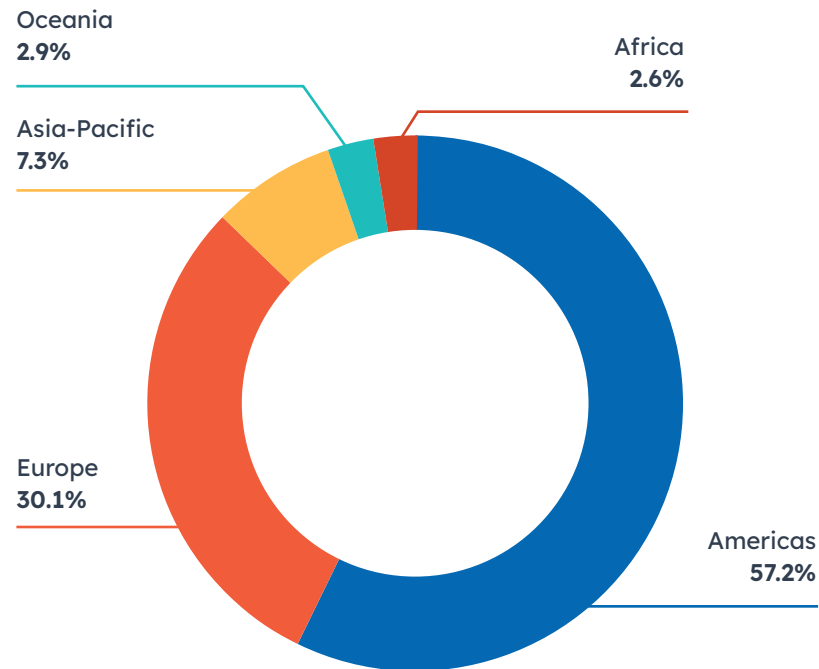
Highlights

- Most geotagged posts are still in Europe or the Americas.
- 9.1% fewer posts were geotagged in Asia-Pacific this year.
- Spain rose from 10th to 4th place by post volume.
- Russia and Iran fell out of the rankings by volume, though posts tagged in St. Petersburg and Iran were still highly engaging.
- Except India, the most engaging country tags were all tropical islands.
- Los Angeles, London, and New York City had the highest post volume.
- Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Delhi had the highest engagement.



Globally

Let's get into the details.



Overall, most posts are tagged within Europe (30.1%) and the Americas (57.2%), just like we've seen in the last couple of years.

But geotags in Asia-Pacific declined a lot, from 16.4% in 2021 to just 7.3% last year. This is especially telling because Asia-Pacific is the most populous continent, housing 60% of Earth's population!

While lower Instagram uptake in Asia-Pacific is nothing new, we also know TikTok is bringing stiff competition. Could the video-first platform be diverting activity away from IG?

Another possibility is that these tags are misleading us. Europe and North America might just be the most popular locations to tag, rather than actually representing nearly 90% of users.



Tips + Tricks: Why Geotag?

Geotagged posts pop up when users search for a city, country, or region. That makes them an ideal tool if you're trying to reach people in a specific location, whether or not you're actually there.

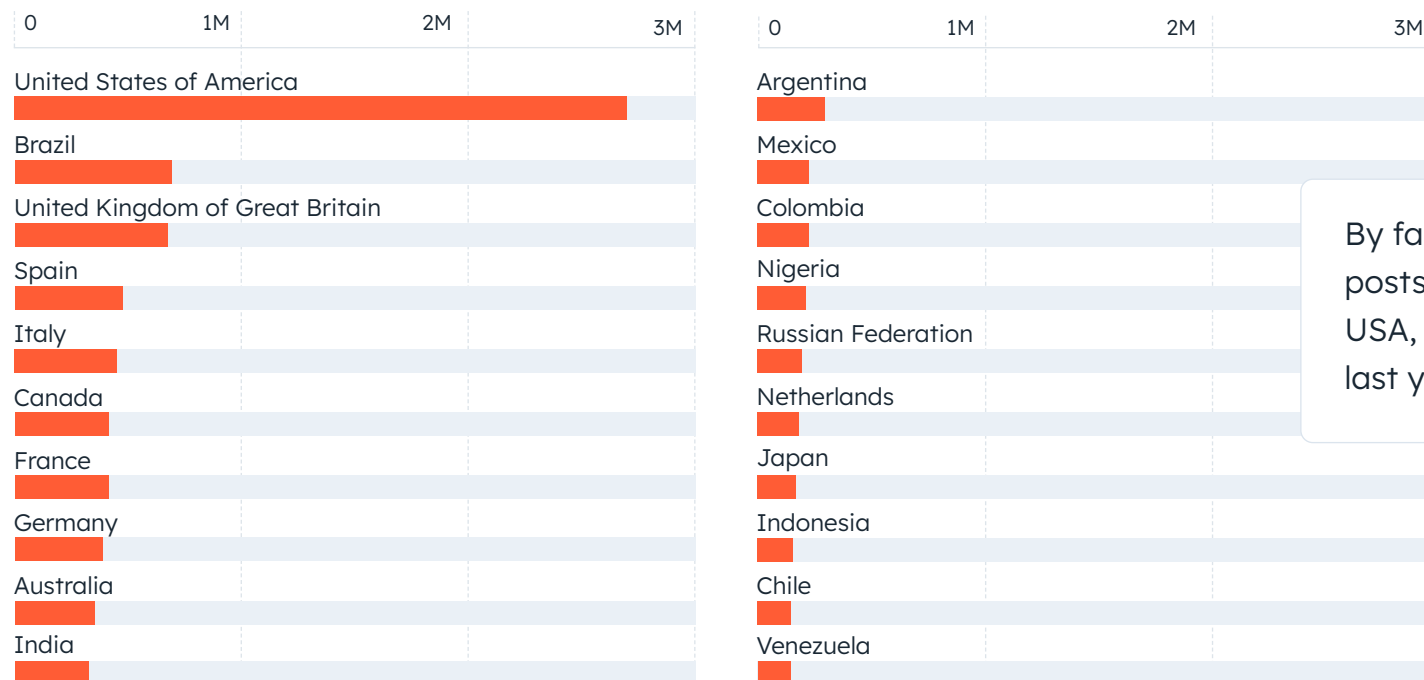
The most obvious use of geotags is for location-specific businesses, like boutiques, coffee shops, and service businesses. These brands are trying to reach people nearby, so it makes sense to keep location front and center.

But they're also useful if you're trying to expand your reach to a different area!

For example, if you're selling digital products aimed at influencers, you might try geotagging your post in Los Angeles. Or if you're located in a small town, but your target audience is young urbanites, you could tag large cities closest to you.

What Countries Are Instagram Posts Tagged In?

Number of posts vs. country



By far the most Instagram posts were tagged in the USA, just like we saw in last year's data.

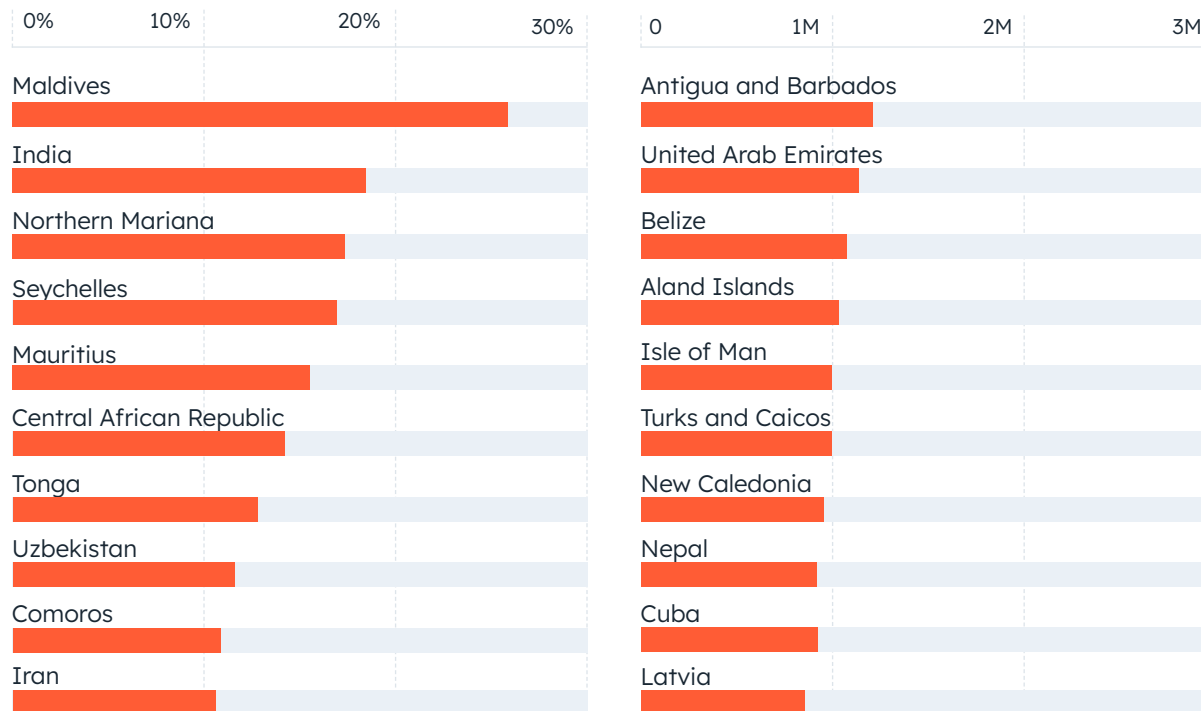
The Top three are also the same as last year: the United States, Brazil, and the United Kingdom. Obviously, the United States and Brazil are hugely populous, while it makes sense that an English-speaking country like the UK would be high up in the list.

Spain skyrocketed up to 4th (from 10th) place, displacing India. Could more travelers this year be enjoying its gorgeous scenery, football excellence, and cultural heritage—or even just dreaming about it?

Russia and Iran both dropped dramatically, falling out of the top 10. Sadly, that’s likely due to the tumultuous years both regions have had politically.

Countries by Engagement

Average Engagement Rate vs. Country



Interestingly, the data looks very different sliced this way. Small nations, with much lower post volume, tended to get awesome engagement!

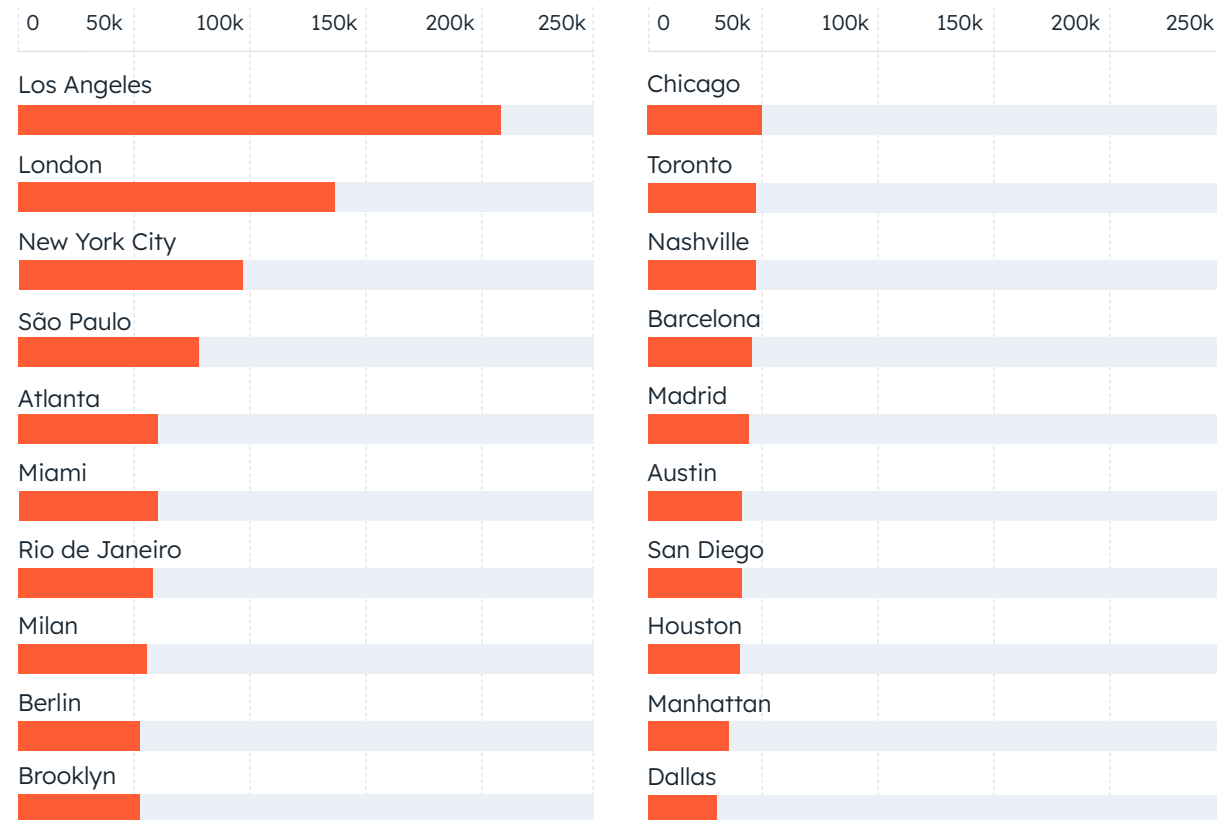
With the exception of India, the top five were all tropical islands, and maybe we shouldn’t be surprised. Everyone loves a beautiful beach, and let’s not forget that plenty of bikini shoots take place here, too.

India ranked high for engagement last year, too, and interestingly, other populous Asian-Pacific countries don't rank at all. Could engagement within this region be driving the high rates we've seen throughout Asia-Pacific?

Despite post volume in Iran plummeting, content tagged here got great engagement. Could these posts be supporting Mahsa Amini, or sharing updates on the Woman, Life, Freedom movement?

Which Cities Are Instagram Posts Tagged In?

Number of posts vs. city



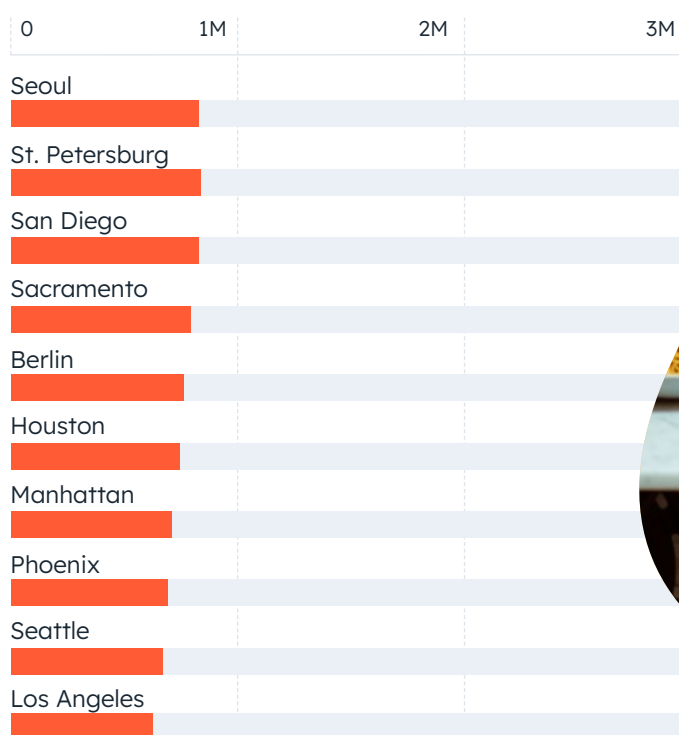
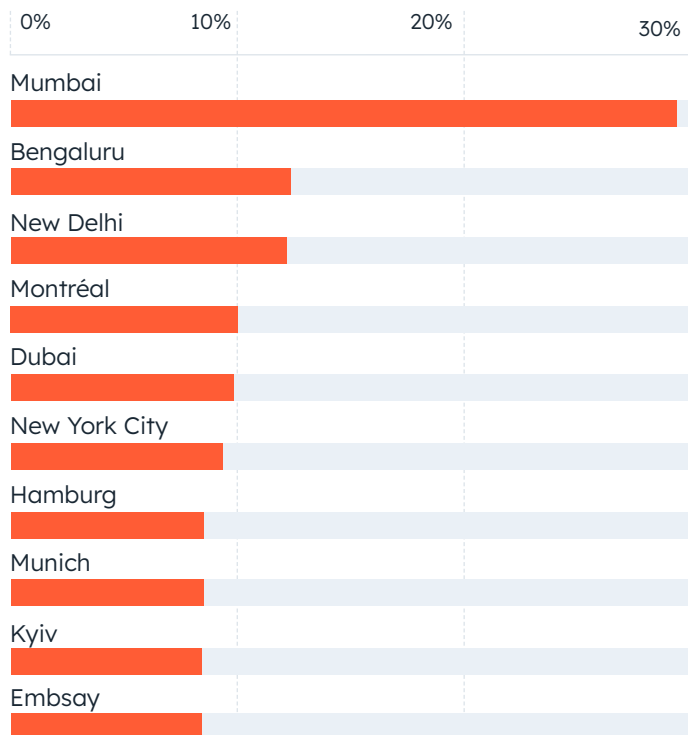
Los Angeles, the epicenter of fame and influencer culture, yet again tops the list. It's followed by London, reflecting high UK geotag volume, but it's not exactly close.

Reversing an interesting trend from last year, New York is back in the top three, replacing Tehran.

And just like we saw in the last chart, Spain is coming in hot! Both Madrid and Barcelona are making an appearance here. Could football or tourism be the reason Spain is suddenly a content hotspot?

Cities by Engagement

Average Engagement Rate vs. City



Things look very different here than a year ago, when posts tagged in small cities saw greater engagement. The top three cities were all large urban centers in India. That makes sense, since we've already seen high engagement from this country!

The rest of the list is mostly mid-sized to large metropolises. There doesn't seem to be a strong correlation between a city's post volume and engagement.

The presence of both Kyiv and St. Petersburg is most likely related to the current conflict, as people turn to social media for on-the-ground, up-to-the-minute news.

Montreal is surprisingly high, too. COP15, the climate conference, was held there in December. While we didn't collect data on December posts, the event may still have kept eyes on the city, and it inspired strong feelings globally and locally.

Conclusion

Ultimately, how you manage your Instagram strategy is up to you. But knowledge is power, and we hope this data helps you make confident, well-informed choices this year.

Not every trend will be true for your unique following. But this look at the big picture can give you a base to experiment from as you keep fine-tuning your strategy.

By understanding the patterns that drive Instagram use, you can make content that delights and inspires your audience. Then, you can make sure they actually see it once it goes live!

As marketers, we use Instagram to get creative, explore the world around us, and build real connections with our customers. With the right data, we can make sure that hard work helps us grow our communities and reach our goals.

Additional Mention + Hubspot Resources

- ✓ [Streamline Your Social Media Marketing: Take advantage of automation to define a flow that works for you](#)
- ✓ [9-Step Guide to Choosing the Best Monitoring Tool for Your Brand](#)

