

The Professional Instagram Giveaway Handbook



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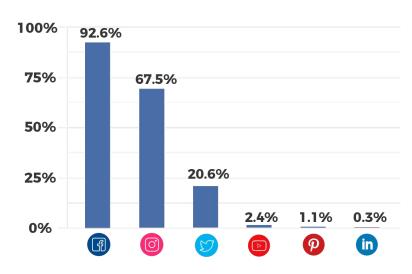
#### INTRODUCTION

Businesses are flocking to Instagram - and although Facebook still leads the pack, the 'Gram is catching up fast.

- 80% of Instagram's 800 million users visit a business profile every day.1.
- 70% of marketers consider Instagram an essential platform<sup>2</sup>.
- Instagram giveaways grow your audience up to 70% faster than other methods<sup>3</sup>.

So let's take a detailed look at all the benefits of Instagram giveaways. You already know how they work - here's why.

## HOW MANY BRANDS USE EACH NETWORK FOR GIVEAWAYS?



Source: Survey carried out by Easypromos, November 2018

# Plan your strategy



#### **ENGAGEMENT OR USER-GENERATED CONTENT?**

Before you can plan your Instagram campaign, you need to know what you want to achieve.

Most people run giveaways on Instagram for one of two reasons:

- 1. They want more **engagement**
- 2. They want more **user-generated content**

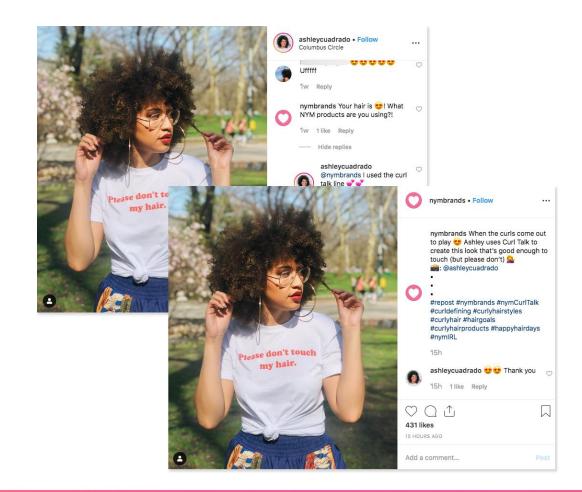
**Engagement** is how people talk and interact with your profile online. It's a way to start conversations and nurture relationships with your target market. You can use engagement to get feedback, follow leads, and delight your customers from beginning to end of the buyer's journey.

**User-generated content** is when people actively start sharing their own photos and videos about your brand. It's like free advertising: you don't have to plan, produce, or share the original content. People will spontaneously do it for you.

As you can imagine, UGC is a great way to get more publicity. But you can't collect user-generated content until you have an active, engaged community.

First, you need to spend time building up interactions and relationships with your followers. You need to **engage**.

And to start building engagement, we recommend Instagram giveaways based on comments.



#### **WORKING WITH COMMENTS**



Comment giveaways are popular with marketers for 3 reasons.

- 1. They're **easy to run**.
- They're affordable.
- They're highly effective.

But with a little extra planning, you can get **even more** out of your giveaways.

First, automate the process.

Why? So you can **maximize engagement** while **minimizing the costs** of time and effort.

Picking winners by hand is time-consuming and often boring. If you use an automatic prize draw app, you'll save a lot of time. And because the winner is chosen by a neutral, random tool, it's easy to show your followers that the competition was fair.

Next, build on the engagement you receive.

Use the comments as a stepping stone to other benefits - like **customer feedback** and showing that you **value your followers**. The ideal question will start a conversation online, while providing you with useful insights into what your target audience is thinking and saying.

On the next page, you'll find 3 quick ideas to start a comments giveaway on Instagram.



- Ask open questions.
   Encourage people to share stories, opinions, or ideas. It's much more interesting than just answering "yes" or "no".
- Give followers a choice. Ask people to pick between two different products or prizes and explain why.
- Fill in the gap. To make it really easy, you could start a sentence and ask your followers to complete it. "I want to win this giveaway because..."

Every giveaway begins with comments - but many brands choose to run **combo giveaways**, where they ask for extra actions as well as comments. Here's a quick guide to what you **can** and **can't** ask for on Instagram.

## Comment Based Instagram Giveaway on posts and reels

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	Comment + Like	Comment + Follow	Comment + Regram	Comment + Story	Comment + Mention
Legal	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Measurable	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Automated	No	Yes*	No	No	Yes
Recommended	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Let's examine those points in more detail.

If you ask for likes, Stories, or regrams, then there is **no automated way** to collect those competition entries. It's time-consuming and complicated, and you can't guarantee a fair prize draw.

But even more importantly, asking for **regrams or screenshot posts** is against Instagram's terms of service. The network rewards **original content**, and punishes recycled, spammy posts.

That's why we recommend **comment and follow** or **comment and mention** contests. Why? Because we can automatically compile comments and mentions. The only thing you will need to do manually, is check if the winner follows your account, as this can't be checked by Easypromos.

Comments are the foundation of **measurable**, **actionable engagement**. Follows, mentions, and hashtags provide **measurable**, **added value**.



We know what you're thinking: can I run a giveaway based on Stories?

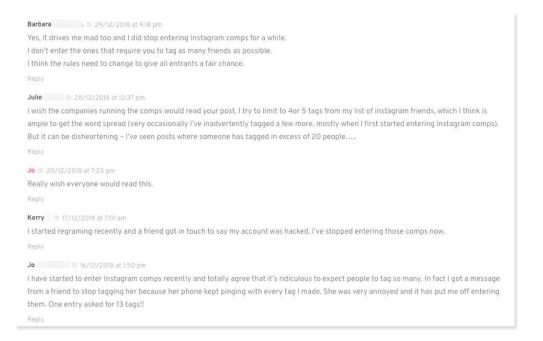
For now, the answer is no. They're great publicity, but you still need a foundational giveaway post.

When Stories giveaways are possible, you'll be the first to know!

Just be careful not to ask for too much. You can invite people to comment, follow, and mention. But if there are too many steps to follow, users will get bored and give up.

Take **loop giveaways**, for example.

Some Instagram users run giveaways where people have to follow a list of up to 50 accounts to join, following a "loop" of accounts back to the original post.



The feedback is clear: **users hate loop giveaways**. Most people won't bother to complete all the tasks, and any audience gains will rapidly melt away.

#### HOW TO TARGET THE IDEAL CUSTOMER

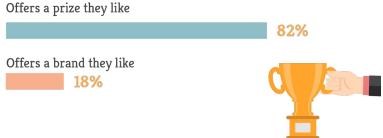
What's the most important factor in your giveaway's success?

#### The prize.

When we surveyed consumers, we learned that prizes are what motivate people to join contests - more than any other factor.

The perfect prize is an **achievable treat**. That's something which your customers want, but can't quite justify buying for themselves.







#### THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS AGREE

They focus more on the prize than the brand of the prize.

When you give away a prize like this, you delight the winner - and, just perhaps, nudge a few other customers into finally clicking "go to checkout"

Be wary of offering a prize which is too general. You don't want to give away a prize which just anybody would enjoy.

Instead, you should target a specific person: **your ideal customer**.



Think about what that person values, enjoys, and aspires to.

Here are some popular ideas for prizes in Instagram giveaways:

- release or promote a new product with free samples
- get rid of last season's stock
- create a bundle or haul of different prizes
- team up with another brand or sponsor
- offer access to a live event
- share discounts



Branded events are a popular trend, but be advised: it's harder to sell something abstract, such as tickets or coupons. Draw users in with tempting, targeted posts.

As social media becomes more and more personalized, you can also encourage followers to pick their own prizes.

Ask your followers to make their choice in the comments, or post a Story poll where people can vote for their favorite.



Another way to reach your ideal customer is through **brand partnerships** and **influencers**.

Picture your audience on Instagram as a broad circle, rippling out from your brand.

You want to find a brand partner whose circle of followers makes a **Venn diagram** with yours. You're not working in exactly the same niche, but your **ideal customers** have similar profiles.





So you've run a giveaway with a partner - but how do you collect the comments from both accounts?

Tools like the Invitations feature allow you to run giveaways from several profiles, without sharing passwords or creating extra giveaway app accounts.

Click here to learn how.



# Design your posts



#### **HOW TO TAILOR CONTENT**

## Ask yourself: what makes you stop scrolling?

An intriguing video? A burst of bright colors? The word "giveaway" in big flashing letters?

Depending on your **personal** style, target audience, and brand aesthetic, the answer will be different for everyone. But we can make some general recommendations.



- Be consistent. Followers quickly develop expectations about your style. Unless you want to make a statement, match the giveaway to your normal posting aesthetic.
- Coordinate posts and Stories.
   Use a similar look, or even the same photo, to create a link between your posts and Stories.
- Post teaser images. Another strategy is to post a teaser image in your Stories, then tell users to search for the full post on your profile.



- How much text? The amount of text in the image of a sponsored post, for Facebook and Instagram, is limited. And you don't want to bore your readers with too much fine print!
- Write a caption that sells. Be sure to describe the prize, explain the rules, and include the legal details.
   Make the contest sound thrilling and urgent!
- Add movement. Gifs and videos are the perfect way to show off a prize in action. In theory, the Instagram algorithm treats photos and videos the same but if an individual user responds to more videos, then more videos will show up in their feed. Think about the content your followers are likely to prefer.



Not sure where to start? Use social media templates.

Our Instagram giveaway templates are free to use and our library covers over 35 different events and seasons.

To get free access to templates with optimized images and text for posts and Stories, sign up here.

#### **GIVEAWAYS AND BRAND SAFETY**

Rules and requirements are a tricky point for Instagram giveaways. While **most brands are scrupulously conscientious**, some influencers and smaller labels play fast and loose with the rules.

At the same time, Instagram users are getting wise - and will call out anyone who runs a shoddy giveaway or encourages spam. So bad actors don't just risk sanctions from Instagram, but the loss of their **reputation** too.

Let's start by reviewing your **legal obligations**.



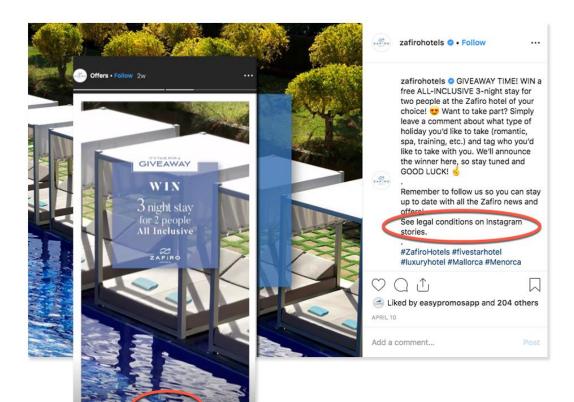
Be sure to check the laws in your country. For example, in the UK, your contest must include an element of knowledge, judgment, or skill.

If you run international promotions, make sure that your Instagram giveaway is compliant in all your locations.

#### You must:

- include a link to terms and conditions
- explain that the contest is not endorsed, sponsored, or organized by Instagram
- follow local laws
- follow the Instagram terms of use, and Facebook terms where applicable







Sharing the terms and conditions is easier than it sounds! Publish your legal details online, then add a short link to your giveaway post caption, Instagram bio, or Stories.

<u>Click here</u> to learn about free templates and web hosting for terms and conditions

#### **USE SPONSORED POSTS**

Giveaways are a powerful tool for building engagement with your existing audience. But they can be a way to draw in new followers, too.

The only problem is, you want those new followers to come from your **target audience**. It's not just about the numbers - remember, you're looking for **ideal customers**.

So how do you make sure your giveaway is seen by them, and only them?

You can run comment giveaways based on **sponsored posts**. Use the tools in Facebook Ads to **target posts** and **segment your audience**. You can even **combine multiple Instagram posts** in a single giveaway.



For even more about how to sponsor posts on Instagram, target different audiences, and manage multiple posts, check out this article.

So, for example, you could create three giveaway posts, each targeting a slightly different group of people. Or you could run a giveaway with a standard post for your existing followers, and a sponsored post for new prospects.

Even without sponsored posts, there are lots of ways to include multiple posts in a giveaway. Why not try...

- posting daily reminders and updates
- adding posts to extend the giveaway if it is very popular
- slowly revealing the prize with a series of photos
- featuring a different prize from a bundle or haul each day
- running a seasonal countdown, such as the 12 days of Christmas, or 24 Advent giveaways



A long giveaway series can place a heavy burden on your design department.

Try using templates to make life easier, like this Advent series.



#### 12 WAYS TO USE STORIES

Stories are Instagram's most successful innovation of the last few years. People enjoy their immediate, authentic content - and the 24-hour time limit adds a note of urgency to any post.

As we've already discussed, you can't run a giveaway based on Stories. But you can - and should - use Stories to **publicize your giveaways** and **double down on engagement**.

Because Stories are often temporary, you can publish them much more frequently than profile posts. In fact, when you run an Instagram giveaway, you should aim to post Stories throughout the contest and its aftermath.

Stories offer a wealth of dynamic features to attract your followers' attention. Let's run through the list...

- Hashtags. Use your brand name or a specific hashtag to create buzz online. Set up a branded giveaway hashtag and use it regularly to grow your reach over time.
- Mentions. Start by tagging collaborators in your Stories. Later, you can share follow-up posts where you tag the competition winners.
- Countdown stickers. Make sure your followers know when the giveaway is going to end. With the countdown sticker, you can keep a fun reminder running on your Instagram profile.
- GIFs. If you have branded gifs, use those! Search for "Easypromos" to add our seal of approval to your Stories.
- Type screens. Sure, they're not the most exciting Story format. But you can use type screens to tease a giveaway before you share all the details, or to explain detailed rules.
- **Livestream.** Share a live unboxing of your prize bundle, or broadcast the moment that you select the winners. This kind of instant, unfiltered video is what made Stories a success in the first place.

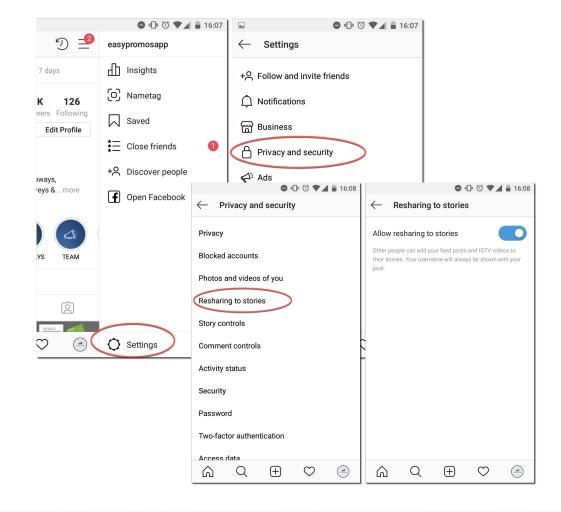
- Poll or quiz stickers. Ask your followers to pick between two giveaway prizes or themes. Check in to find out how the giveaway is going. And when it's over... ask if they want more!
- Question stickers. Use question stickers to get more detailed feedback, and show that your brand is listening. Ask if your followers have any doubts or queries about the giveaway then answer them as soon as possible.
- Slider stickers. This is another handy, albeit non-verbal, way to hear from your followers. Set up a slider to find out their opinion of the prize or giveaway.
- Music stickers. Add some background music to set the mood.
- Product stickers. Just like shopping tags in sponsored posts, you can add stickers
  which link directly to your products. Giveaways are an opportunity to showcase your
  top items so make it easy for customers to shop.
- Swipe-up links. Use these to add even more information, from product details to terms and conditions.



To maximize reach, make your Stories shareable. It's surprising how few brands activate this option!

Update your settings so that users can tap the "message" icon to share your posts and Stories.

When followers share your giveaway announcements and updates, you'll reach a whole new audience.



## Offer added value



### **GIVEAWAYS AND QUALITY CONTROL**

We've already talked about how to make sure your giveaways reach the right audience. The next step is ensuring **quality content and engagement** from that audience.

Anti-fraud tools have become an essential part of every marketer's kit. While giveaways are a powerful engine for **genuine engagement**, they can also be targeted by bots or spammy giveaway accounts.

That's where filters and quality controls come in.

Start by **limiting competition entries**. Tell your users that you will only accept one comment per user - and then use tools to enforce that. Otherwise, your giveaway is more vulnerable to getting hijacked by spam accounts.



"Tag as much as you want!" "Each tag in a separate comment!"

These methods are spammy - and ineffective. However many times someone comments, they still only get 1 prize draw entry for their username.

Next, when you start harvesting comments to select a winner, you have three basic options:

- Filter by hashtag. Use a dedicated hashtag for your brand, regular giveaways, or a specific event. Limit the prize draw to users who include the hashtag in their comments.
- Filter by mention. Encourage users to share the contest with friends who would enjoy it. Ask for **up to 5 mentions** any more than that, and your giveaway is vulnerable to spam.
- Filter by number of posts. If you have included multiple posts in your giveaway, try limiting the prize draw to users who comment on a minimum number of posts.

Beyond those basic steps, there is even more you can do. Your goal is to curate a quality audience over time - so be prepared to keep track of users across giveaways.

#### You can:

- exclude users who comment with more than one hashtag
- exclude users who comment after a certain time
- exclude comments which are too short
- exclude winners of previous giveaways

If somebody behaves in a way that you consider unacceptable, you can **exclude** them from a single giveaway, or **permanently blacklist** them.



The exclusion tool is also useful if one of your staff makes a comment for test purposes.

Check that their comment appears correctly - then exclude them so that the prize draw is fair.

#### **HOW TO CUSTOMIZE PRIZES**

When it comes to social media, users want more and more **personalized experiences**.

Running tests, picking alternate winners, and getting a certificate of validity are all key parts of every giveaway. But if you run contests with **multiple winners** or a **variety of prizes** - then you have extra options for customization.

For example, you could invite users to **pick their own prize** from a list. You can assign **different prizes in rounds**, with a single grand prize followed by smaller rewards. You could even assign specific prizes based on the **hashtags** which people use in the comments.

We know that actually **delivering prizes** is one of the **pain points** in social media contests.

So how do you get the winners' contact details? How do you store that data securely, and fulfil your GDPR compliance?

Use a **customizable** registration form to collect the winners' contact details. This is an easy way to verify their claim, and get a little more lead-qualifying info at the same time.



That takes care of the practicalities. Now, let's talk about **going viral**. And in 2019, **viral means video**.

#### GO VIRAL WITH THE PRIZE DRAW RESULTS

Publishing the winner is an important step in a giveaway - and it's often neglected. But if you get it right, you can extend the benefits of your campaign long beyond the closing date.

Start by announcing the winner in the comments of your original post. Make sure you **tag** the winner. You should follow up by posting **Stories**, and even reaching out with **DMs** 





But if you really want to **increase the reach and impact** of your giveaway, don't restrict yourself to Instagram.

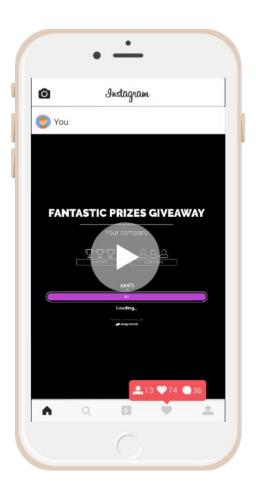
Announce the winners on your other social channels, website, and in email newsletters too. Add extra links to view the competition entries, and show off the prize draw's **Certificate of Validity**.

Why? So that all your potential customers - wherever they are - will see that you offer **added** value.

Above all, if you want more attention online, then you need to share **videos**. Giveaways are a golden opportunity to **create instant, viral video content**.

Instead of a static winners page, try broadcasting your prize draw live. Show your followers a dramatic countdown, before announcing the winners and prizes one by one.

Remember to adapt your video for different formats, including **vertical video** for Instagram and Facebook Stories.



## Follow up and feed back



#### **HOW TO MEASURE GIVEAWAY ROI**

Social media giveaways aren't just a way to raise your profile or announce new products. They are also an extremely effective way to **learn more about your followers**. Use them to **improve ROI** and **inform your next campaign**.

Let's start with the basics. The **comments** on your giveaway will tell you a lot about your followers' attitudes, tastes, and interests. You can uncover those by reading the comments posted on your giveaway. This should fit right in with your existing social listening practice.

But you can dig deeper. Use the feedback from an Instagram contest to discover your **ideal posting times,** analyze **comment posting patterns**, meet your **super-fans**, and **compare engagement** with other social networks.

Here are the key analytics you should look at to improve your ROI:

- Peak participation by date. Find out which day your giveaway received the most interest. Why close the contest if the participation curve is going up? Extend the competition to get even more entries.
- Peak participation by time. Identify the hours that your followers and participants are most active. Use this to figure out optimal posting times, or which timezone most of your followers are in. Focus your posts and community engagement to receive more engagement.



We often hear from social media managers and marketers that one of their biggest challenges is demonstrating return on investment.

Use Advanced Statistics by Easypromos to add colorful graphics to your social media reports, or feed information into Data Management Platforms.



If you run giveaways on multiple social networks, get a breakdown of unique individuals and comments from each network in your giveaway. Then you can evaluate where your fans are most active.

<u>Click here</u> to learn about advanced statistics and insights from Easypromos.

- Most active followers. Get a list of your 10 most active followers. Identify any accounts which are participating irresponsibly, or reach out to people with high levels of genuine engagement. Categorize your followers so that you can target responses for each group.
- Unique individuals. Find out your real level of engagement by comparing number of contest interactions with number of unique users. To evaluate your contest ROI, you need to understand more than just the raw numbers - you need to know how much each person is engaging with your posts.

#### CONCLUSION

So, at the end of this ebook, what have you learned?

Hopefully, you've had the chance to clarify your goals for marketing on Instagram. You've picked up a few new ideas, and refreshed your knowledge of best practices for social media sweepstakes.

But more than anything else, I hope you've seen the **possibilities of an Instagram giveaway**. Although giveaways are already a popular marketing strategy, I believe that their true potential has not yet been untapped. There's so much more to do: making customers a voice within your brand, reaching out to ever-more-specific audiences, and leading the way as a responsible, trustworthy brand.

If you're interested in even more advanced, technical tips, then watch out for our next ebook, coming soon. Or if you're ready to get started, <u>click here to sign up for free with Easypromos</u>.

Until next time - good luck, and good marketing!

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My name is **Corinna Keefe**. I write and research for Easypromos, contributing to our English blogs, ebooks, and tutorials.

My special interest is marketing on Instagram, including best practices and new developments. I've written guides, led conference seminars, and contributed to Social Media Examiner on this topic. With this latest ebook, my goal is to show you all the benefits you can get from an Instagram giveaway.

If you'd like to learn more about our work with giveaways, or you have any questions about this ebook, you can contact me and the rest of the marketing team at <a href="marketing@easypromosapp.com">marketing@easypromosapp.com</a>.