

Instagram Advertising

THE PERFORMANCE MARKETER'S GUIDE TO

Advanced Marketing



Instagram has been growing in popularity for years, but its potential as a powerful revenue driver for digital advertisers has only just begun.

Since Instagram first opened its doors to advertisers by unlocking programmatic access to its ad solutions, marketers have been eager to master the visually-based platform. Why? With an audience of over 800 million monthly active users that has doubled in size since 2016, Instagram is one of the world's largest mobile advertising platforms, second only to its parent company, Facebook.

In-house marketing teams partnered with CC&A Strategic Media are well equipped to manage, measure, and scale marketing and advertising campaigns on Instagram. For marketers that highly value revenue-generating performance—like those partnered with CC&A across ecommerce, retail, lead generation, gaming, mobile app development, online travel, and more—early outcomes are impressive.

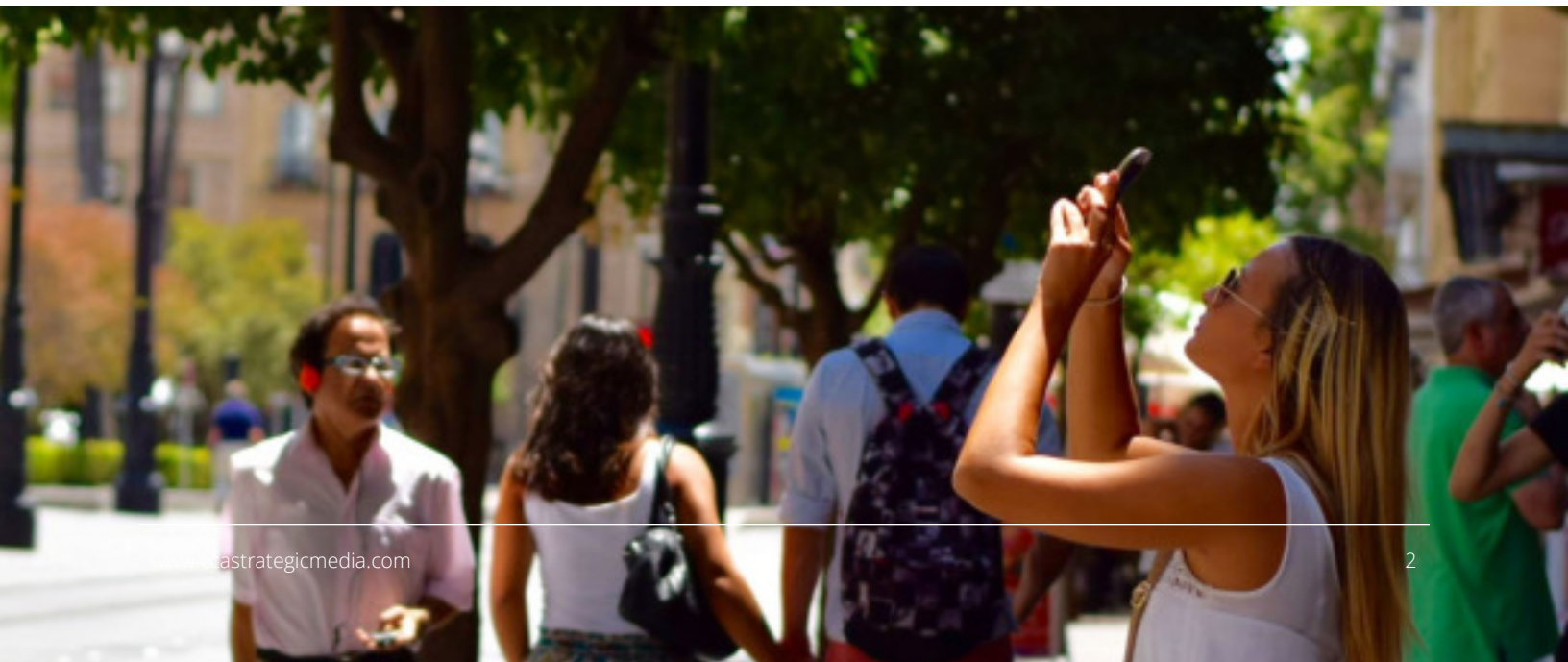
One large ecommerce company achieved 179% return on Instagram ad spend in just 60 days. In a similar time period, another leading retailer increased Instagram purchase rates 219%, nearly matching parallel purchase rates on Facebook, all while scaling budgets 266%.

Data-driven marketers have a huge opportunity to combine Instagram's massive mobile audience, Facebook's industry-leading targeting capabilities, and CC&A's strategic marketing services to drive real revenue from their advertising investments. This guide has everything marketers need to seize the opportunity and start powering business growth on Instagram today.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- ✓ Demographics: Who's on Instagram
- ✓ The direct response advertising opportunity
- ✓ Ad types and specifications
- ✓ Creative best practices
- ✓ Keep it fresh: Creative iteration
- ✓ Scaling direct response success

This guide includes compelling Instagram ad creative examples from a wide variety of advertisers, and companies featured are not necessarily CC&A Strategic Media customers.



1 DEMOGRAPHICS: WHO'S ON INSTAGRAM

Instagram's user base is booming, with **a community of more than 800 million monthly active members**. According to Pew Research, **59% of those users visit Instagram daily**, and 17% visit on a weekly basis. Since so many people use Instagram so frequently, it's clear that browsing the app has become part of their regular mobile routine.

Users on Instagram are also highly engaged. As of November 2017, more than 80 billion photos have been shared on the platform. Every single day, Instagram's global user base posts an average of 80 million new photos and engages through more than 3.5 billion likes.

Instagram is **a global phenomenon**, with 75% of users located outside of the United States. Instagram attracts **both male and female users** (51% and 49%, respectively) and includes a diverse range of ethnicities. Most notably, **52% of all teens ages 13-17 use Instagram**, indicating that the mobile platform appeals to a younger demographic. If you're looking to reach a millennial audience, then Instagram is the place to be.

2 THE DIRECT RESPONSE ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITY

Instagram is a direct response advertiser's dream. The experience is entirely mobile, with native ads that are beautifully integrated into a highly visual stream of organic content. The nature of the platform gives direct response advertisers a powerful visual canvas to communicate value and inspire action among their target audience.

Even before Instagram ads offered direct response features like off-site links, the platform was **a proven driver of purchase intent**. Recently, Instagram has been heavily investing in advertising solutions that cater to the needs of large-scale data-driven marketers. Instagram benefits from Facebook's years of expertise building tools tailored for direct response. For example, marketers on Facebook are familiar with Custom Audiences and lookalikes, which offer a simple and automated way to launch campaigns to audiences that are known to perform well. Products like this mean there's no need for a "cold start" on Instagram, and marketers can reach high-value audiences right from the outset.

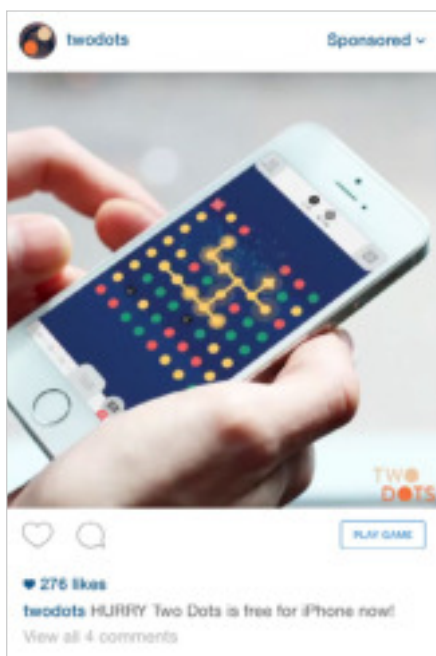
In addition to the full power of Facebook's industry-leading targeting capabilities, other direct response innovations like clear call-to-action buttons on products including video and carousel ads make Instagram an increasingly attractive channel for performance marketers.

The opportunity to increase purchase rates, acquire high-value mobile app users, or quickly scale your business' subscriber base is huge. Instagram now has the scale, audience, and ad features to become a powerful driver of growth for today's savviest advertisers.

3 AD TYPES AND SPECIFICATIONS

For marketers who are well-versed with Facebook's direct response ad types, Instagram's offerings may seem familiar. While Instagram ads are backed by Facebook's robust targeting abilities, they also have unique specifications and requirements of their own.

To ensure you're choosing the best ad type for your direct response objective, take some time to review the growing variety of options available on Instagram.



MOBILE APP INSTALL ADS

Boost mobile app installs

	Recommendation	Requirement
Image Ratio	1:1 (square)	1.91:1 (landscape) 1:1 (square)
Image Size	1080 x 1080 pixels	600 x 600 pixels (square) 600 x 315 pixels (landscape)
Caption	125 characters (no links)	300 characters max (no links)
Call-to-Action	Install Now, Use App, Book Now, Download, Learn More, Listen Now, Play Game, Shop Now, Sign Up, Watch More, Watch Video	

Note: Images must not be comprised of more than 20% text.

TRY THIS:

Showcase in-app functionality, the device on which your app will be used, or someone from your target audience interacting with your app. If your app has a recognizable character or some kind of win screen—like a bonus level or promo code—experiment with featuring it in your ad creative.

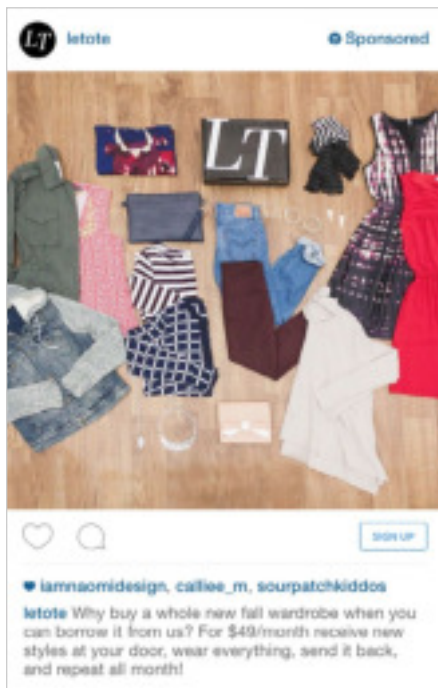


PHOTO ADS

Drive specific actions on your website

	Recommendation	Requirement
Image Ratio	1:1 (square)	1.91:1 (landscape) 1:1 (square)
Image Size	1080 x 1080 pixels	600 x 600 pixels (square) 600 x 315 pixels (landscape)
Caption	125 characters (no links)	300 characters max (no links)
Call-to-Action	Book Now, Contact Us, Download, Learn More, Shop Now, Sign Up, Watch More	

Note: Images must not be comprised of more than 20% text.

TRY THIS:

Test different copy variations to discover which words are driving site visits. Then, further optimize copy based on what's performing best for your campaign objectives (e.g. member registrations, purchases, sign ups, and more).



VIDEO ADS

Tell a story to inspire action

	Recommendation	Requirement
Aspect Ratio	1:1 (square)	1.91:1 (landscape) 1:1 (square)
Length	15 seconds	2.5 seconds min, 30 seconds max
Caption	125 characters (no links)	300 characters max (no links)
Call-to-Action	Watch More, Book Now, Contact Us, Download, Learn More, Shop Now, Sign Up	

Note: Videos should be in .mp4 format, and thumbnail images must not be comprised of more than 20% text.

TRY THIS:

By default, Instagram autoplays video ads with no audio, and automatically loops at the end of the video. Make sure the first few seconds of your video include eye-catching visuals that will grab your audience's attention even without sound playing.



CAROUSEL ADS

Showcase multiple products or one product from many angles

	Recommendation	Requirement
Image Ratio	1:1 (square)	1.91:1 (landscape) 1:1 (square)
Image Size	1080 x 1080 pixels	600 x 600 pixels (square) 600 x 215 pixels (landscape)
Caption	125 characters (no links)	300 characters max (no links)
Call-to-Action	Book Now, Contact Us, Download, Learn More, Shop Now, Sign Up, Watch More	

Note: Images must not be comprised of more than 20% text.

TRY THIS:

Tell a narrative story with each progressive image. Be sure your first image is compelling enough to prompt your audience to engage and scroll to see what's next. With a unique visual storytelling format, you can get creative to drive clicks to your website.

4 CREATIVE BEST PRACTICES

Instagram is all about communicating visually, so it's essential that your ad creative is eye-catching. Because users speak a visual language, it's important to make sure that your ads adhere to creative best practices. Keep these six basic rules of thumb in mind as you create your Instagram ad campaigns.

① LIGHTING AND DETAIL

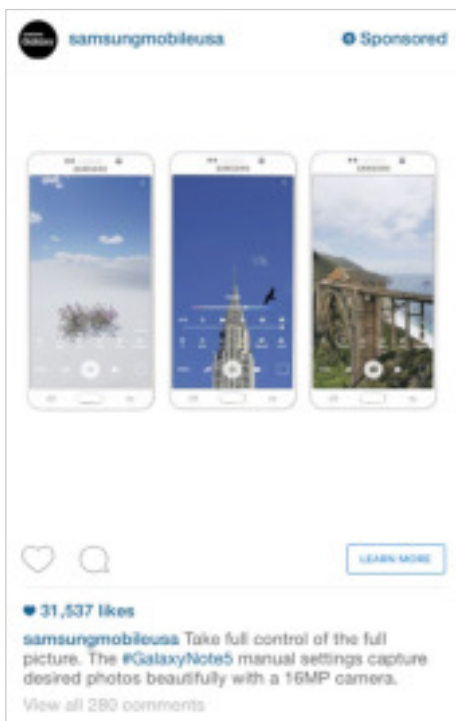
Make sure your Instagram images are high quality in order to fit in naturally with other photos on the platform. Avoid grainy or blurry images. When producing creative for your ads, choose natural lighting over harsh, artificial lighting. The more authentic your image, the better.





② CLASSIC COMPOSITION

Photo composition basics go a long way on Instagram. Ads will be more appealing when you apply classic composition techniques such as the Rule of Thirds, balance, leading lines, and creative framing. Let your creative stand on its own by keeping things simple. Elements like borders or heavy photo filters can detract from your imagery, and subsequently distract viewers in your target audience.

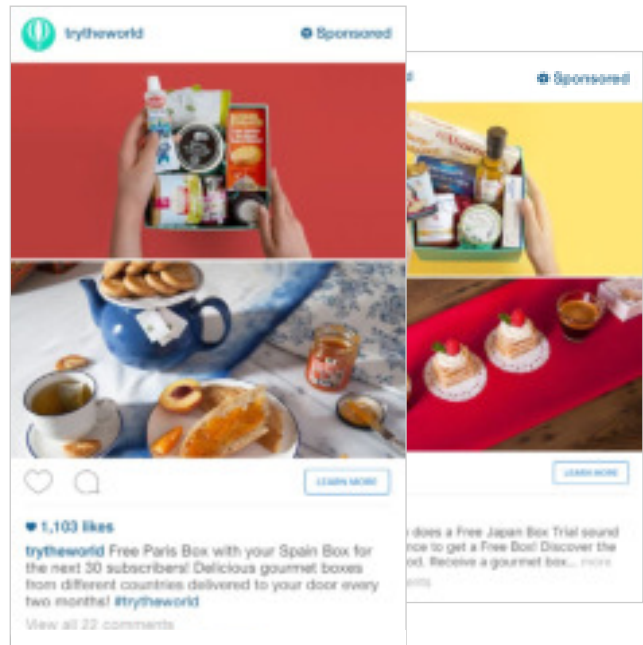


③ SUBTLE BRANDING

Don't let your brand overshadow your content. If you're going to include your logo in your ad creative, do so subtly. Otherwise, try focusing on an iconic brand element or signature color for memorable yet not overpowering branding.

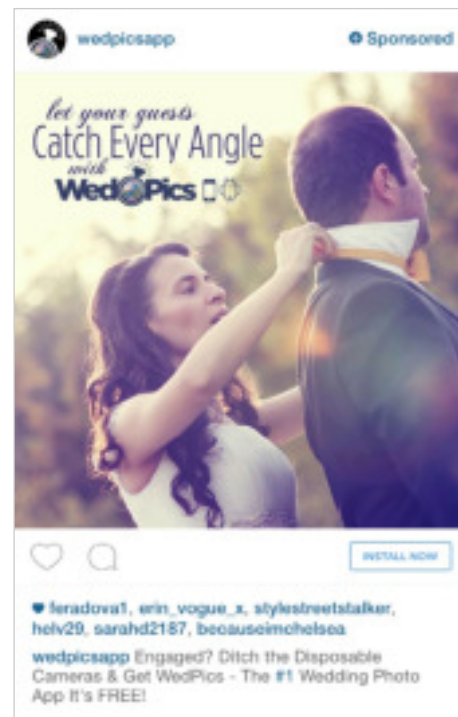
④ CONSISTENT VISUAL MESSAGING

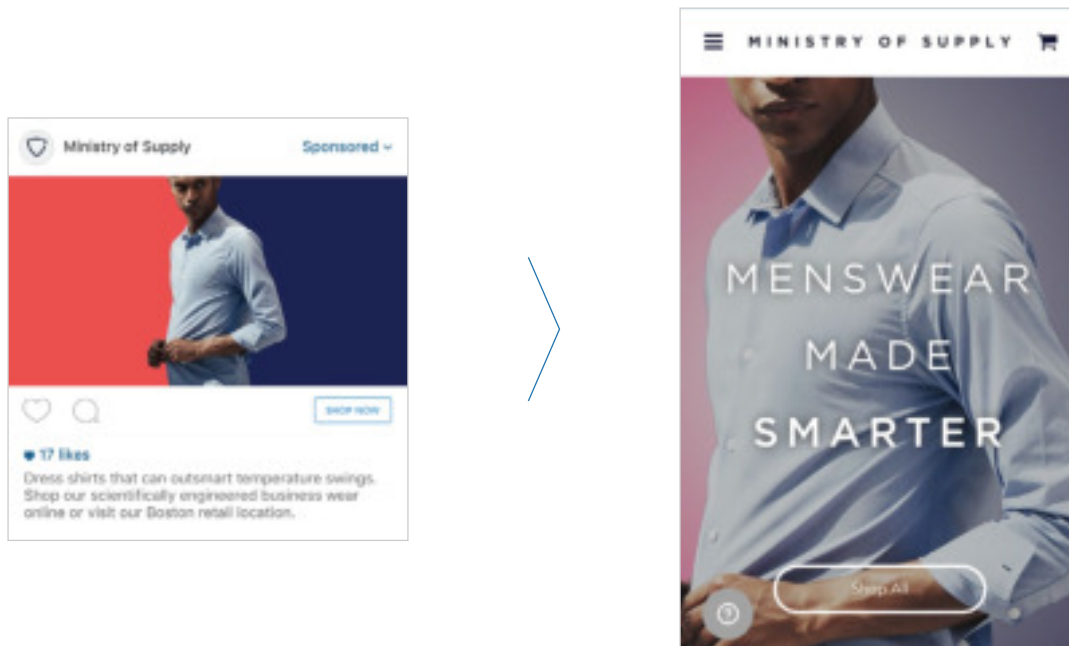
Customers will understand and remember what your brand stands for when you use strong and consistent messaging across all your campaigns. Focus on a central idea that is conveyed in a storyline, a specific visual style, or a continuing theme. Make sure the image alone conveys this message so users can understand it even if they don't read the accompanying text.



⑤ MINIMAL TEXT

Imagery—not text—should be the main focus of your ad creative. If you use text overlay in your photos, make sure it covers less than 20% of your image. Alternatively, try sharing the accompanying text in the ad caption instead of on the image itself.





⑥ MOBILE OPTIMIZATION

Ads only appear in Instagram's native mobile apps on iOS and Android, where the overwhelming majority of users browse the site. Since Instagram is an inherently mobile platform, it's crucial that your ad creative is designed with smaller screens in mind. Equally as important is that ads link to mobile optimized landing pages. Don't forget to keep the customer journey smooth by aligning branding and messaging across your ad creative and landing page design.

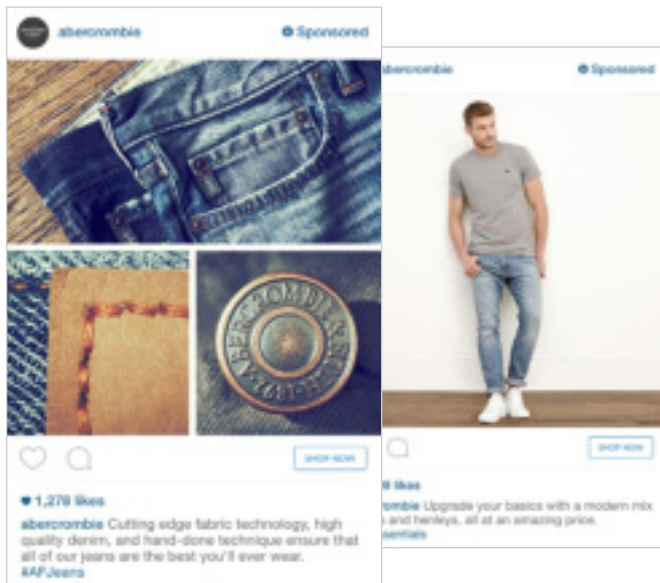
5 KEEP IT FRESH: CREATIVE ITERATION

Repeatedly promoting the same ad to your target audience can lead to ad fatigue or even negative reactions towards your brand. Regularly iterating on your best ads is essential. With consistent changes, your audience always sees fresh creative that's more likely to inspire them to take your desired action.

Here are a few examples of strategic creative iteration from advertisers who are keeping things fresh on Instagram.

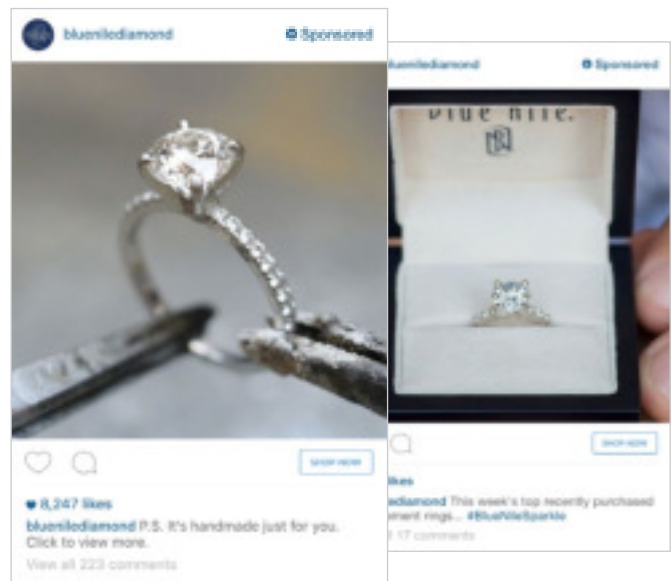
Bloomingdale's, an omnichannel retailer of designer apparel and accessories, uses different imagery to appeal to distinct segments of its target audience—while leveraging the same copy in both ads. Though the message is consistent, the presentation is entirely new in order to capture the attention of a different buyer persona.





Here, retailer Abercrombie & Fitch takes a close look at the details and craftsmanship of its jeans. To refresh the creative concept, the second ad takes a wider view, selling not just one pair of jeans, but an entire outfit and attitude.

Blue Nile emphasizes the quality of its product in the first ad, highlighting the fact that its rings are handmade. The second ad appeals more to the emotional association of presenting an engagement ring, while demonstrating social proof and credibility through the ad's caption. By using different creative approaches and varying the emotional appeal of its imagery, Blue Nile can prevent ad fatigue and keep its audience engaged.



6 SCALING DIRECT RESPONSE SUCCESS

Once you start achieving strong performance—whether that's increasing purchase rates, growing your app's install base, or driving high-quality leads—you'll need to know which tactics and targeting strategies work best. With that knowledge, you can replicate and scale your success in a much more sustainable way.

For high performance marketing teams like CC&A, looking to power true business growth through Instagram, marketing automation can be critical to their success. Here are just a few of CC&A's tools and tips behind some of the best-performing direct response campaigns on Instagram.

COHORT ANALYSIS

This powerful tool breaks up performance data of common characteristics or experiences into segmented cohorts, and then visualizes the data so you can easily identify patterns across the lifecycle of a customer. By identifying top performing ads and deciphering what made them a success, you can replicate those attributes to ensure that your future ads drive similar results.

Revenue	Nov 10 - Nov 16 Cohort	Nov 17 - Nov 23 Cohort	Nov 24 - Nov 30 Cohort	Dec 1 - Dec 7 Cohort	Dec 8 - Dec 14 Cohort	Dec 15 - Dec 21 Cohort
Total Spend	\$168,301.26	\$227,176.68	\$296,198.06	\$444,834.88	\$494,488.66	\$223,487.12
Day 1	\$256,318.31	\$502,336.98	\$289,318.28	\$798,411.87	\$767,286.42	\$521,691.11
Day 2	\$265,369.64	\$442,384.89	\$587,137.96	\$666,174.52	\$666,145.07	\$666,876.61
Day 3	\$327,887.26	\$524,888.24	\$436,523.81	\$664,488.32	\$1,366,725.71	\$666,488.26
Day 4	\$352,888.27	\$666,888.26	\$488,788.38	\$1,044,237.41	\$1,167,545.36	\$752,367.40
Day 5	\$380,648.62	\$644,188.81	\$538,388.31	\$1,119,552.19	\$1,266,588.58	\$754,881.88
Day 6	\$412,318.36	\$666,814.96	\$584,438.18	\$1,185,188.24	\$1,385,481.88	\$781,288.81
Day 7	\$437,188.87	\$737,776.16	\$644,837.88	\$1,344,187.79	\$1,428,641.32	\$783,112.65
Day 8	\$462,784.48	\$787,288.18	\$687,783.88	\$1,315,885.19	\$1,488,184.09	\$802,812.40
Day 9	\$487,782.73	\$828,876.48	\$743,187.72	\$1,382,388.88	\$1,581,783.44	\$818,288.88
Day 10	\$498,873.59	\$883,552.55	\$797,814.81	\$1,446,013.48	\$1,688,876.54	\$828,888.52
Day 11	\$518,118.29	\$903,333.18	\$838,823.16	\$1,495,382.38	\$1,845,721.37	\$841,483.84
Day 12	\$533,734.33	\$944,576.30	\$868,317.43	\$1,552,888.85	\$1,881,832.79	\$857,876.15
Day 13	\$547,367.70	\$981,233.77	\$888,857.48	\$1,595,758.25	\$1,712,742.06	\$888,725.36
Day 14	\$562,818.43	\$1,008,727.76	\$908,282.75	\$1,638,438.29	\$1,796,633.94	\$903,876.61
Day 15	\$576,187.36	\$1,078,587.46	\$978,844.82	\$1,684,775.81	\$1,786,176.88	\$908,783.68
Day 16	\$584,188.08	\$1,121,888.85	\$1,015,487.41	\$1,713,588.34	\$1,782,248.63	\$918,888.36
Day 17	\$607,833.83	\$1,156,034.18	\$1,048,888.38	\$1,757,388.88	\$1,862,871.88	\$932,838.82
Day 18	\$626,318.77	\$1,181,382.82	\$1,088,838.38	\$1,782,185.24	\$1,828,433.88	\$948,888.67
Day 19	\$646,818.83	\$1,216,284.41	\$1,108,788.70	\$1,782,872.87	\$1,867,484.45	\$958,873.23
Day 20	\$668,284.88	\$1,248,433.42	\$1,133,521.85	\$1,800,318.88	\$1,887,778.34	\$968,218.88
Day 21	\$687,571.28	\$1,283,223.44	\$1,166,216.15	\$1,818,848.21	\$1,888,832.23	\$978,888.27

CREATIVE TESTING

Because Instagram is all about the visuals, you want to make sure that you're putting the best possible creative in front of your audience. Automated creative testing automatically promotes ads based on performance, ensuring that the image and copy combinations best suited to drive your desired results are prioritized over all others.



STOP LOSS

While scaling Instagram ad campaigns, you'll want to avoid exceeding your target CPA and instead work towards meeting your yield goal—encompassing your targets for both overall spend volume and return on that ad spend. CC&A's in-house teams highly recommend stop loss to monitor each individual ad in your campaign and automatically pause ads that are under-performing.

CLOSED-LOOP ATTRIBUTION

Understanding which campaigns and channels are delivering the strongest returns is the first step toward scaling your success. Because Instagram is a natively mobile platform, closing the loop on attribution across devices enables you to more intelligently optimize toward lifetime value and attribute revenue back to specific efforts. Implementing tracking pixels on desktop and mobile is the best way to paint a complete picture of your return on investment on Instagram. You can reliably correlate engagement on one device with resulting revenue-driving behavior on another, so you can more quickly replicate results across desktop, mobile web, and mobile apps.

CUSTOM AUDIENCES AND LOOKALIKES

Instagram's personalized targeting capabilities help you do everything from retargeting lapsed customers to attracting new high-value leads based on your best and most loyal customers. Pairing custom audiences with lookalike audiences takes the guesswork out of scaling user acquisition and retention, leading to increased revenue on Instagram.

7 ONLY THE BEGINNING

Marketing and advertising interest in Instagram is skyrocketing, and with good reason. This fast-growing visual community provides digital marketers with the unique opportunity to reach a large, young audience and drive measurable direct response performance through beautiful and engaging ads.

The bar for quality is high, but marketers can ensure greater ROI with a solid foundation of knowledge of Instagram's potential and the creative techniques that keep ads running at peak performance. Through testing new concepts and scaling initial success using advertising automation, in-house marketing teams can turn Instagram into a cornerstone of their digital advertising strategy—driving true business growth on a massive scale.

FREE RESOURCE

Facebook Marketing: The Advanced Guide to Facebook Advertising to Scale ROI

If you're looking to increase revenues using one of the world's most impactful marketing channels, this FREE GUIDE features everything you need for success in the years to come.

[Download the Free Guide](#)





CC&A Strategic Media

STRATEGICALLY PLANNED MEASURED RESULTS

CC&A Strategic Media empowers in-house marketing teams to grow the revenue impact of their digital marketing and advertising. We analyze big data, understand brand values, and look for demographics that are under represented. Our team uses technology, psychology, art, and science to grow businesses!

Offered as a strategic marketing partner, CC&A features multichannel programmatic media buying, predictive revenue optimization, and real-time business intelligence across today's most valuable digital channels.

Contact Us

www.CCAStrategicMedia.com

PO Box 39 | Perry Hall, MD 21128

Info@cca-mail.com

410-931-6717

