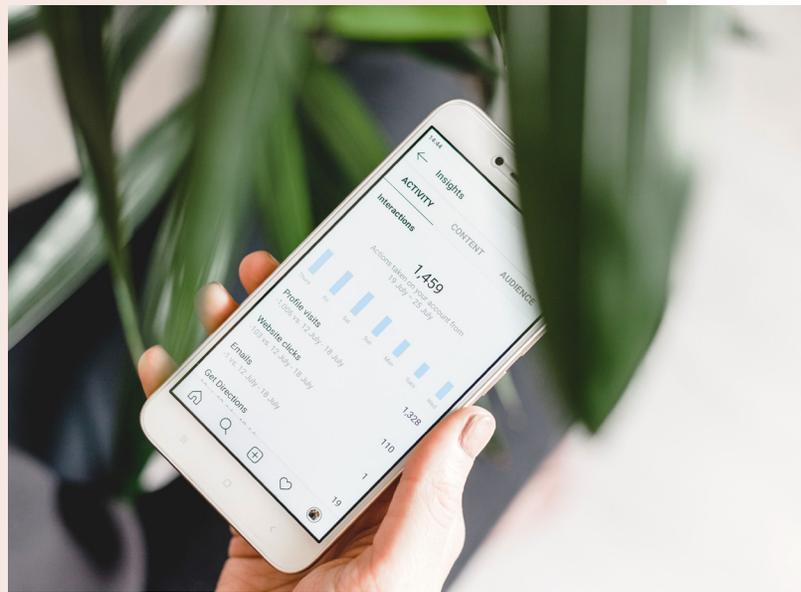


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# WRITING FOR *social media*





Crafting a great caption for your social media posts can be torture. Somedays the temptation to just post an image with a lazy “Monday’s be like…” kinda caption is overwhelming.

But I use social media for business. It’s a giant part of my marketing strategy, and if I’m not going to be intentional, on-brand and engaging with the messaging I’m putting out there, I might as well not posting at all.

The bottom line is, if you want to be successful on social media, your captions have a job to do.

To help you with this daunting task, I’ve put together an Everything-You-Need-To-Know Guide to Writing Killer Captions.

### **FIRST THINGS FIRST.**

#### **WHY A GOOD CAPTION IS IMPORTANT**

Of course it’s true that whether we’re talking Instagram, Facebook or Pinterest, pictures are very important. They are the first thing a browser sees and need to do the heavy lifting as far as grabbing attention. But the CAPTIONS are what get you engagement, reach, and, in the end each the platform algorithms that you’re a brand people want to hear from.

Without getting into too much unqualified tech speak, when a post receives a lot of likes, comments and shares, social media platforms take note that you’re creating high-quality content and the algorithm will “bump” the post up on peoples’ feeds.

If you get enough engagement you could even end up on the “Explore” page. That’s no small feat but, you know...goals.

## COMPONENTS OF A GREAT CAPTION

The best captions are ones that **provide value**, **showcase your brand personality** and **inspire your followers to take action**. Your captions can be long or short. It really doesn't matter. As long as they're engaging, you're winning.

### PROVIDE VALUE

When I'm writing a post, my approach is always "how can I add value for both my audience and my brand?". That sounds complicated but it's not. Look at your image, in this scenario let's say it's a product you make. "Value" can be information about the product. An interesting detail that sets it apart, a comment about how it can make your reader's lives better, a discount or limited edition, that kind of thing. To me the word "value" means "information that makes this post special". Something your readers can think about.



## SHOWCASE YOUR BRAND PERSONALITY

Your brand personality is your voice. Because my brand is "cheerful", "friendly" and "real", I write all of my posts in a friendly tone that's authentic. It's so much easier when your brand voice is the same as your own. And for handmakers, that's a bit easier because our craft is such an extension of ourselves. Don't be afraid to show your own personality through your work and your online voice. The most engaging posts are often the ones where we expose our true selves.

Another great way to showcase your brand personality is with emojis. We all have our favourites and there are lots that if you use them consistently, your audience will begin to associate with you. I do a lot of yellow hearts, hugs and that cringey face. Cheerful, friendly, real. Boom.

Emojis add colour, fun and can inspire people to read on.

### extra tip

**KEEP THAT BRAND VOICE CONSISTENT THROUGHOUT ALL OF YOUR MARKETING EFFORTS. USE IT TO WRITE YOUR WEBSITE CONTENT, ADVERTISING, SIGNAGE AND EVERYTHING. A BRAND IS NOT SIMPLY A LOGO. IT'S HOW PEOPLE THINK OF YOU WHEN YOU'RE NOT THERE.**

## INSPIRE ACTION

What are you asking your audience to do with the information (value) you've just provided? If you want to drive engagement, you need to give readers the tools to do that. For example, you could ask your followers to take action by clicking a link, liking an image, buying a product, answering a question, tagging a friend, using a hashtag, sharing an image on their own social media and tagging YOU.

When inspiring action, think about using actionable words like "join", "learn", "build", "start", "now", "today" to prompt...well...action.

I also want to mention you don't have to save that call-to-action for end of your post!

Because captions are shortened when viewed among the larger feed, whatever you most want people to see should be right up front in your first few lines of text!

These days we all have the attention spans of guppies. We have to grab attention quickly if we want any chance of keeping it. And the longer you keep your viewers engaging, the more likely the platform will give your posts preference.

## how I do it

### EVERYTIME I GO TO WRITE A POST ON INSTAGRAM OR FACEBOOK, I DO THE FOLLOWING:

- 1 Look at the image I've chosen and decide what my end goal is.
- 2 Then I take a couple minute to brainstorm how to achieve that goal in a way that would be unexpected. I am a storyteller by nature so I basically try to think of a story that relates to my image and gives some insight into who I am (as a brand).
- 3 Add an engaging question.
- 4 Include a call to action.

For the purpose of giving you an example, let's say I have a beautiful image of a ring we carry in the shop.

- 1 **END GOAL:** Sell the ring. Sell ALL the rings. :)
- 2 **HOW CAN I THINK OF THIS CREATIVELY** (*here's where I do a little stream of consciousness unedited rambling*): I wear these rings. I found them at a craft show and picked them up for the shop and I love them because they're light and I'm kind of fussy when it comes to big jewelry...and I stopped wearing my wedding ring for that reason...and I've been looking for something I can wear all the time in its place and my poor husband feels like I'm walking around pretending we're not married so I wear this ring instead because it's small and it has a little diamond and now everyone's happy.
- 3 **ENGAGE (AND RELATE):** Anyone else out there no longer wear their wedding ring because it's too impractical?
- 4 **CALL TO ACTION:** Buy your own darned ring! Link to the item on my website.

# Tips for improving reach and engagement

## TELL A STORY

The most engaged audiences are ones who can relate to you. Instagram especially is a place where the curtain can be lifted and we can talk to our followers like friends. I know it's scary, but try giving little tidbits of who you are (as a brand, but still) through relatable personal stories.

## SHOW A PICTURE OF YOURSELF!

I know. It's the worst! But YOU are what your audience wants to see. It doesn't have to be a full on glamour shot. If you're a maker, snap a pic of you in action at the sewing machine, or in front of your busting-at-the-seams craft supply cupboard. We all have that craft cupboard and we love seeing that you do too!

## DON'T BE AFRAID TO GET MESSY

Anyone else tired of seeing only perfection in your social media feeds? Show your audience your mistakes, your flaws and your failures and you'll be shocked by how much we like knowing you're just like the rest of us.

## TAG OR MENTION OTHER BUSINESSES

Mentioning businesses or individuals in your posts is a great way to connect with other users, and to promote one another. If you are featuring an image that belongs to someone else, don't just tag them in the image, include their handle in your caption as well to make it easier for your followers to find them. Don't ask to be followed back (eww...David) but do it in a way that they'll feel encouraged to do so and, you know, maybe promote you too.

## USE HASHTAGS

OMG hashtags right? It took me forEVER to get a handle on A) what the heck they are and B) how to use them.

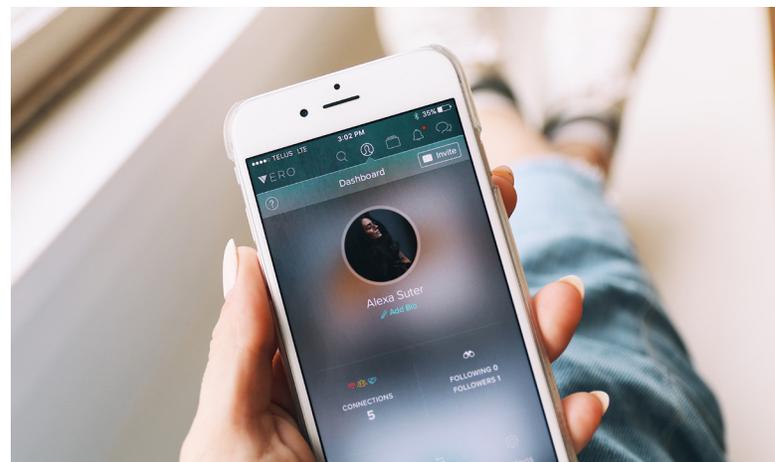
Let me start by saying you do NOT have to use hashtags to write a good caption, but they can definitely help improve engagement and attract attention from people who aren't already following you.

They're also a great way to discover content created by your followers about you (that's some free content right there!).

There are two ways you can add hashtags and I like to use both.

Whenever possible I like to integrate them right into the caption instead of leaving them to the end. Don't use too many (I say 1-3 max) or it'll start to look junky, but placing them among your copy increases the chance of them being clicked.

If you have more hashtags to include, I prefer to find them in the first comment so that the caption remains nice and clean looking.



## extra tip

### HOW TO PREP YOUR HASHTAGS

- 1 Prepare your hashtags in a note before you post your image and caption.
- 2 As SOON as you post your image, be the first person to comment.
- 3 Add a period (.), dash (-) or asterisk (\*) on 3 separate lines THEN add all your hashtags together (up to 30 on Instagram).

This way, when your comment appears in the thread it will look like [...] and won't be visible to your audience or take away from your post (but they'll still serve the purpose of being searchable).

### YEAHH...BUT HOW DO HASHTAGS WORK THO?

We could get super technical or I could just tell you what you need to know.

Hashtags help organize and categorize content so that they can be more easily discovered.

For example, I could post that picture of a ring and use the hashtags #silverring #ring #madeincanada #handmadejewelry

Someone searching for that type of product might decide to search Instagram by using any of those words and, in doing so, would hopefully stumble across my image. I said hopefully because I wasn't very strategic with those tags.

In order to be successful with hashtags, it's important to be thoughtful about their use. That means being both creative and specific. The riches are in the niches people, and here's what I mean. The most popular hashtags are just simple words. You can tell if your hashtags are overused because when you type them in, Instagram shows you how many times they've been used. And while you might think using a popular word is a good thing? It's not. It just means your image will be added to huge sea of other images. You might get a few likes, but they aren't aren't working that hard for you.

We need to craft hashtags that are creative, unique (but not too unique) and that are being search by YOUR audience.

### SO, HOW ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO DO THAT?

Bottom line, it's a bit of a constantly changing crap shoot. But let's try to have fun with it anyways.

The best way is to start looking at the hashtags your audience, competitors, and industry leaders are already using. Go for a deep dive and try things on for size. Get weird. Get wacky. Have fun.

I might go back to that ring post and add hashtags like #ringoftheday #ringceremony #ringoffire #stackingring #stackingsilver #stackingbands #blingboss #bitofbling etc.

I found all of those by just typing in #ring and seeing what came up down the list on Instagram.

Some will be stronger than others, but experimentation is key in this process.

### KEEP USING WHAT WORKS, AND MOVE ON FROM WHAT DOESN'T.



## AND THERE YOU HAVE IT! SOCIAL MEDIA CAPTIONS DEMYSTIFIED!

I hope this info gets you inspired to start having more fun with social media, and that those likes, follows and shares start rolling in.

You deserve to be successful and I'm really happy to be able to help you get where you're going.

connect with us

[CHEERFULLYMADE.COM](http://CHEERFULLYMADE.COM)

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