

# Instagram for Authors by Karen Clark

[www.MyBusinessPresence.com](http://www.MyBusinessPresence.com)

## Additional Resources:

Instagram Help Center: <https://help.instagram.com/454502981253053/>

Instagram for Business Blog: <http://blog.business.instagram.com>

Instagram's Community Guidelines (rules!) <https://help.instagram.com/477434105621119>

Instagram Terms of Use (more rules!) <http://instagram.com/legal/terms/#>

NOTE: As of this writing, you must use the mobile app to upload and post to, but the photos are visible on the web [instagram.com](http://instagram.com) as well.

## What Instagram IS:

- A window into your world sharing “Kodak moments” that allow people to get to know you, how you spend your days and evenings as an author, speaker, business owner, where you are going, who you are with.
- Great to share book signings, speaking events, conference pictures, snapshots of displays, creative photos of people or objects, and short videos.
- A picture and video editing platform where built-in filters allow you to alter your images and videos and make them stand out in a unique way.
- Designed to be mostly used for pictures or video you take “on the fly” vs. graphics you create, though those can be fun once in a while. Focus on photos!
- A SOCIAL network where friends and followers can like and comment on your images.
- Integrated with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr and a powerful way to share your images across all of these.
- Primarily designed to be PUBLIC. Anyone can follow you whether or not you follow them back, although you can block specific users if necessary. Anyone can view your profile and images on the web, unless your account is set to be restricted (not recommended for business!)
- A powerful way to bring new people into your network and connect with your existing people on a more casual/personal basis.
- Becoming a powerful platform to share short videos.
- 600 Million users with about a 49/51 male to female ratio. 90% of Instagram users are under 35 y/o. 41% under 24.
- Hashtags are a powerful way to be discovered and network with others.
- Influencers are often hired to post on Instagram about a brand.

## What Instagram is NOT:

- No links in your posts, unless you pay to sponsor them. It's just picture sharing.
- Not a place to post highly detailed graphics (too small on the phone!) 91% of Instagram posts are photographs.
- Not simply a gallery of photography or product images - it's social.
- No way built into Instagram to share each other's images. Post original content.
- Not a great place to share very personal pictures or locations, due to its public nature.

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## Basic How-To's:

1. Download the Instagram app and create an account. If you use Twitter, it's a great idea to use the same username if you can. As an author it's great to use your name. Note that there is a Business Account option but at the time of this writing the reach for business accounts was low. If you intend to pay for sponsored posts you can switch your account to being a business account temporarily during that time.
2. Fill out your Profile including headshot, description and website. Some people like to include emoji or a bulleted list of qualities/products in their bio, using emoticons as the bullets. Try composing your bio in a Note first so you can include line breaks - you cannot use more than 150 characters, including emojis if used.
3. You might want to fit your phone # into your bio if you can. If you aren't comfortable sharing your personal contact information consider setting up a free Google Voice number or Gmail and using those.
4. Sync with your contacts such as Facebook friends, Twitter followers, or address book, and find those already using Instagram. Follow those you would like to connect with. You can add more any time.
5. Familiarize yourself with the buttons - Home, Explore, Upload, Notifications, and Profile.
6. On your Profile button (your picture icon) the top right shows the Gear for settings, and Edit Your Profile to change your bio etc.
7. The buttons under your profile are to see images in a grid, to see them in a list, to see them by location, to see which ones you are tagged in and to see images you've saved. These buttons, except for Saved, are on other people's profiles as well, if you want to check them out!
8. On the Notification button (heart) at the bottom, you can sort by those you are Following, or by You, at the top. Following shows you what people you follow are liking, commenting on or following. News contains notifications specifically for you such as when someone follows you, likes or comments on your post. Note that others see what YOU like or follow when they look at theirs, too.
9. On the Upload button at the bottom (the plus sign) you can choose to upload an existing picture from the Library tab, take a picture on the Photo tab, or take a video on the Video tab - all across the bottom. At the top you can cancel, reverse the camera and turn on or off the flash. Once you've taken the picture there are a myriad of filters and tools you can use to edit the image before posting. When you are done editing you will be able to write a caption, tag people who are in the photo, select your location

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(optional), and cross-post to other social media sites.

Note: By default, Instagram, when the Facebook button is ticked, will post to your PERSONAL Facebook profile. If you would like it to either always or once in a while post to your Business Page (fan page) instead, you will need to manually re-set the Facebook connection to do so. Here's how:

1. Go to your profile and the settings gear on the top right
  2. Find the Share Settings link and click on Facebook
  3. Change Share to Timeline to the name of your Business Page under the Choose a Page section
  4. Go back and upload your image with the Facebook share button on. Be sure to go back into that setting to turn it back to sharing to Timeline if you don't want all your Instagram-to-Facebook shares going to your Business Page
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8. On the Explore button, the magnifying glass at the bottom, Instagram will show you a collection of images and videos they think you might be interested based on what is popular in your area or with the people in your network. Pull down to refresh the page and switch them up. Click on the search bar at the top to search on keywords for People to follow, or Tags/Hashtags to see posts from or posts from nearby locations.
  9. On the Home button (house icon) you will see a single Your Story and circle images of your connections at the top. This is a place where you can add pictures or videos throughout your day which will be displayed in a continuous fashion but only visible for 24 hours.
  10. For the main Home page, you will see a one-column feed of the posts your friends have uploaded, in mostly chronological order from most recent on back and somewhat influenced by an algorithm that shows you ones you are most likely to want to see. Each post shows the username of the person posting, the time when they posted, the picture, the number of likes (tap to see their usernames), the caption and any hashtags, and subsequent comments. There is a Like button at the bottom (you can also double-tap to like the image) and a Comment button to add your own comment. The paper airplane icon lets you send that post privately to one of your friends and the bookmark icon lets you save it to your Saved tab. The ellipsis to the right of their username (three dots) allows you to turn on notifications for that person's post and if their account isn't private you can also share that post out to your own social media or to copy the URL of that post to share via text or email, or to report it as inappropriate. When looking at a photo from a friend, tap once to see who is tagged in it. You can then click on the username of the person tagged and see their profile.
  11. If you do need to report a photo, you will be asked why and your choices are 1) I don't like this photo (with an explanation on how to block someone), 2) This photo is spam or a scam (sends a report to Instagram immediately), 3) This photo puts people at risk (Choices are self-harm, harassment/bullying, or drug use) or 4) This photo shouldn't be on Instagram (nudity, violence, hate, or intellectual property violation)

## Instagram for Authors by Karen Clark

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12. Also at the very top right of your Home button is an Inbox indicated by the paper airplane icon. This is Instagram Direct. Through this Inbox you can send private direct messages/images or videos to one or more individual users. Click the Inbox then click the camera icon next to the person you want to send a message to. If they aren't listed click the plus sign at the top right to choose them. From there you can add your photo from either your camera roll or by taking a photo/video. You can filter and edit the same way you would in the main Upload button, then add a caption. Another way to do it is from the main page click the plus sign like you are posting a picture but then after you take it at the top change New Post to Direct Message. You can then type in names of friends you want it to send to, or select from a Suggested list. You can send an Instagram Direct message to up to 15 people at a time. Once a DM is sent, or received, the recipient can Report, Ignore, or Hide the posts, so be sure they are welcome (do not spam!)

### Instagram for Authors CPR

**Comment:** Each day, find 3-5 other posts to leave a relevant or useful comment on. Bonus points if they're on people who you'd like to build a stronger business relationship with! Feel free to add tags, emojis and hashtags to your comments if it would benefit the person who posted or personalize your comment.

**Post:** Post consistently (about once a day if possible, 3-7 days per week ideally) but not too much! If you have a lot to post, spread them out if possible so they aren't coming in one after another in your followers' feeds. Sometimes you are at an event or exploring and just want to share a lot of pictures! This is fine, just try to let some time go by between each upload when you can. Post items that would be well-received by your followers. Mostly non-promotional in nature (see Instagram 911 below!) but using 2-5 hashtags when you can, and any emoji that would make the post stand out.

**Reply:** Be sure to reply when people comment on your posts, or send you a direct message. You do not have to reply to each comment individually, but one at the end of the day is great, especially if you @tag specific people you are responding to in your comment. Feel free to add emojis to make your replies more personal!

### Instagram for Authors 911

The 9-1-1 code for social media was created by me to help business owners regulate the types of posts they are sharing in social media. As a general rule, the proportion of your posts with regard to non-marketing and marketing-related posts should roughly follow this guideline.

- 9 Non-marketing - A mix of scenery, people, inspirational quotes, animals, "day in the life" pictures and how-to pictures or videos related to your content or not. This is where trust is built. The idea is to serve your readers in some way so that when you do post something promotional (below) they trust you enough to say yes.

# Instagram for Authors by Karen Clark

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- 1 Promotional - Something directly related to promoting your book or services. It is vital to not go overboard with these—you will lose followers if you do! By the way the very BEST businesses on Instagram still use a photo for their promotional posts and include the promotion information in the caption. People want to see photos on Instagram so limit the “graphics” type of posts with text and fancy fonts to only once in a while. This is a real pet peeve for a lot of Instagram users so do focus on photos.
- 1 Personal - Casual or funny, off the wall or unexpected, or posts where you ask a question for interaction. The goal of the personal post is to break things up or let them get to know you or your sense of humor even better on a personal level, totally unrelated to business. This is where rapport is built.

There's no hard rule about how often to post or when on Instagram but in general if the ratio of non-marketing to promotional posts weighs heavier on the non-marketing you will have a much easier time with building trust and rapport with your followers, so that the 1 post a week when you do promote a product or service, they are much more likely to take action.

## Hashtag Etiquette and How to Choose Them

Hashtags are words that are put together (no spaces) with a pound sign/number sign in front of them that becomes a live clickable link. The hashtag leads to a feed of posts where others have also used that hashtag, and you can scroll through and see the posts, or follow people who share that common interest.

There are several ways Hashtags are being used on Instagram:

1. To add a sort of snarky comment such as #sorrynotsorry or #oopsididitagain  
These are a “funny” way to add a virtual thought bubble to your caption.
2. To participate in Instagram-wide themes such as #tbt for Throw Back Thursday (posting a picture from years ago) or #mcm for Man Crush Monday (post a picture of your husband/ boyfriend or a celebrity you admire.) See below for a list of the most common.
3. A way to organize your own posts based on your own themes, so you can access them easily such as #karensvacay or #karenskids #mybooktitle
4. Keywords that are commonly used in hashtags to find pictures and follow people based on a specific topic such as #yourbooktopic or #yourtypicalaudience
5. For event participants to share pictures during and after an event. Everyone adds the event hashtag to their photo such as #nsa14 and #comicon

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6. When businesses ask readers to use a hashtag they've created for promotional reasons such as a contest or pictures of customers at a shop or using a product

I really am not a fan of posts where there are more than 5 hashtags being used - and you will see this a lot! People will pad their caption with so many of them that you have to scroll down the page to get to the next comment or post. This is too much and appears spammy. It seems as if the only reason you posted the image was to attract people via the hashtags. I prefer to stick to 3-5 at the most. You can always edit the post and switch them out later.

Be sure to click on hashtags you use or are interested in and see what has been posted using it. This is a great way to find people to follow too and the protocol on Instagram is the usually people you follow will follow you back if there's something in common.

You can find popular hashtags using various online tools. These are my favorites:

**Hashtagify.me** <http://hashtagify.me> - Type in a keyword or hashtag you think you would like to use or that would be relevant to your post, and Hashtagify.me will give you the all time 10 top hashtags related to that keyword. They do this by matching up posts where others have used your main hashtag, and find out which others those people have used as well. It is not an exact science, and it is mostly based on Twitter, but it works to give you some fresh ideas you may not have thought of.

**Iconosquare** [http://iconosquare.com/stats\\_optimization.php](http://iconosquare.com/stats_optimization.php) - This site is fabulous for general Instagram analytics - take some time to explore and if you are someone who likes tracking progress you will love it. The Optimization section of the Statistics page will not only give you hashtag suggestions based on overall Instagram popularity but it will point out which of the hashtags you are using are most effective (if any!) and fall into the top 100.

You can even create your own branded hashtag - use it consistently and others in your network may start using it as well. A popular contest idea is to ask your viewers to take a picture with your product and use a specific branded hashtag you've made up in the caption so you can find it easily. Choose your winner from those you find in the hashtag feed.

### Contest ideas

Contests are a great way to achieve goals such as increasing engagement, getting new followers, sending people to your website, and making sales. Here are some ideas that seem to work well - make sure the instructions are clear in your caption, such as how to win and if they can enter more than once. And add the hashtag #contest!

- Announce a giveaway that will be randomly drawn from anyone who comments on your picture.

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- Give something away to the very last commenter at a specific time.
- Ask your followers to post pictures with specific content - such as them holding your book, or a video saying why they want to win - and to use a certain hashtag to label the picture, or to tag your account so you are notified. Then choose a winner randomly.
- Have a photo contest where you will judge a photo (identified by tagging you or with a hashtag) based on certain criteria. Could be most creative, or best use of filters, most inspiring caption etc. You be the judge or as part of the contest, as your viewers to like the picture they want to win and the picture with the most likes gets the prize.
- Run a scavenger hunt contest. In your post list 3+ items your viewers need to take pictures of and post with your tag/hashtag to be entered. Be as simple or crazy as you think your audience can handle!
- Play a guessing game. Take a picture of you or your book in a location others would know, or doing something they can guess. Have them guess your location or activity and choose a winner among those who answered correctly.
- Have a seasonal/holiday photo contest. Have your readers dress up or decorate for a specific holiday, and post something specific in the caption with your unique hashtag. Choose among the participants.
- Ask your followers to be creative by posting a photo that depicts something specific. For example, Valentine's Day is coming, post a picture that represents true love and use hashtag #trueloveKC (the KC to identify it as Karen Clark's vs. random people using the #truelove tag!)
- Simply announce that all \_\_\_\_\_ (some activity such as new subscribers to your newsletter, or likes on your Facebook) within a certain time period will be entered to win, and the link is in your bio. Put the link to the specific action you want them to take so it's easy!
- Finish your sentence - Have readers fill in the blanks of a sentence such as the last 3 words of a chapter title, or 3 favorite colors, or I want to win because... It can be a set answer required or any answer is entered.

### Additional Instagram Strategies for Authors

1. Remember to be mostly authentic, not promotional. Showcase your writer's journey from planning through publishing and beyond, then use your Instagram to engage with your readers.

#### Post Ideas for Authors:

- Pictures at or of your computer during the writing process
- Pictures of boxing up your books or preparing them for shipment

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- Picture of receiving your first order of books
- Pictures of your book “in the wild” or in unusual or meaningful settings
- Quotes from your book. Use an app like Wordswag to create a quote image or just write it on paper and take a picture of it in a nice setting
- Pictures of you, your books, your display etc. at book signings
- Pictures from writing conferences, festivals or other events
- Screenshot your book pages with markup or notes
- Pictures of any sketches or outlines while in the process of planning or writing

2. Include your own **hashtag in your book** and encourage your readers to use it when posting ideas, reflections or pictures of your book. Use the Repost app to repost them to your own account. Do the same for pictures you’ve been tagged in.

3. Host a **Q & A session or an AMA session** (Ask Me Anything) using Instagram Live video broadcast. Announce the day/time in advance on your social channels, encourage people to DM (direct message) you questions in advance though they can also post them as comments within the broadcast. Followers who have notifications on will get notified when you go Live.

To go Live, tap the camera icon or the My Story icon at the top of the home page. Swipe the bottom selector to the right to select Live and check your settings. I recommend turning Save Shared Photos on so that the recorded video will be saved to your device and can be repurposed later. Otherwise it disappears when the broadcast ends. Flip the camera to be facing if it isn’t already.

4. Link your Facebook **Business Page to your Instagram** account and when you create boosted posts or ads on Facebook it will send the same post to Instagram as a “dark post” that does not appear in your profile but may appear to targeted Instagram users within their feed.

5. At **speaking events**, ask audience members to Follow you on Instagram in exchange for a freebie or discount. They show you on their phone that your account as been followed.

## My Favorite Instagram Mobile Apps

- **Repost for Instagram** by Red Cactus LLC - Allows you to choose from your friends’ picture you have liked on Instagram and repost them to your own Instagram, giving the original username credit. A watermark appears indicating it is a “Repost” and you can edit whether you want the watermark to be light or dark and on which side of the image. This is a great way to share others’ posts and add your own caption in addition to theirs. Be sure to only repost pictures from people who would be OK with it, and pictures that are appropriate for resharing. Ex: Do not share someone’s personal family photo, but do

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share a quote image or animal picture.

- **Perfectly Clear** by Digital Optics - One of the easiest apps for “instant” editing of images where you can clear over exposure, “beautify” facial and skin qualities and general tweak your images without too much of a learning curve. A slider shows you a before and after of your image.
- **Diptic** by Peak Systems - Not only can you create collages but you can add text to them, create rounded corners or even circles, or random edges, eliminate borders, and more. 179 layouts are available to customize.
- **InsTrack** by Innovatty LLC - A great app to see when someone isn’t following you back, so you can unfollow them if you wish. It will also alert you as you lose or gain followers, and some other statistics that can be useful if you are trying to keep your feed clean.
- **I also like:**
  - Perfectly Clear
  - Afterlight (count down numeral frames!)
  - TagFire (find hashtags)
  - TagforLikes (more hashtags)
  - Over (Add text over pics in interesting ways)

### Final Thoughts

I hope this has been helpful. If you have questions please reach out to me any time. I post daily tips on Facebook and am available to answer questions there or by email. If you would like private consulting, that is available on my website as well. My primary business as an author is paid professional speaker, so if you know of an event that serves entrepreneurs who need my expertise, I would appreciate a referral. Thank you and good luck!

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My Books: [www.booklaunch.io/karenclark](http://www.booklaunch.io/karenclark)