

# 5 tips for providing great customer service on Instagram



Instagram originally hit the scene in 2010 as a quirky, artistic place to share photos. Then, it blossomed into a marketing powerhouse, saturated with business ads and influencers.

But Instagram isn't done evolving.

You may still think of it as a marketing tool, but the next generation is upon us. The future of Instagram for business is as a tool for support teams to better serve customers.

If you want to keep up with your customers, you need to provide customer service on the social sites where they're already spending time. Use these quick tips to make sure your Instagram customer service is a home run.



## 1. Use social lingo

In order to connect with your audience, your posts and messages should “sound” like them. This means clever use of emojis, hashtags, likes, and mentions.

Give yourself permission to **use emojis in your responses to customer questions and issues**. On Instagram, more than half of all posts have emojis. And there's a practical reason for that flair: Using emojis increases your engagement by [48%](#). In fact, studies show the more emojis you use, [the more interactions you'll get](#).

**If you're posting content, keep your captions short and sweet – and don't be afraid to use hashtags.** A lot of businesses think that posting long, detailed captions is the best way to get customers to pay attention. In reality, [studies show](#) that the most engagement happens with captions from 50–150 characters. For hashtags, the more you use, [the more engagement you'll see](#).



## 2. Slide into those DMs

Just like Facebook or Twitter, Instagram has a direct message (DM) feature to talk to customers privately. Use DMs to your advantage by knowing when it's time to move a conversation from comments into private, such as:

- When a customer question or issue requires a customer to share **sensitive information** (like credit card info, order numbers, addresses, etc.). Send a DM to let the customer know which platform they should use to share the information.
- When the back-and-forth is over a **very specific issue** that your public audience doesn't need to see, and is clogging up your feed.
- When an issue **requires escalation** to another platform or somehow needs to be moved off of Instagram. You can't put clickable links in Instagram comments, so if a link is required, DMs are best.

People won't always be checking their DMs if they're expecting a response from you in the comments. After sending a DM response, respond in the comments with something like, "Great question! Check your DMs for more help!"

**Be careful about moving conversations to DMs too quickly if someone is unhappy.** Resolving the issue publicly will build more trust with your audience, who may perceive you taking the conversation to a direct message as you having something to hide.



## 3. Resolve issues from Instagram, not a third-party tool

One of Instagram's main selling points is how simple it is to use. Customers expect the same experience when chatting with your brand.

Strive to provide true omnichannel support by **answering questions directly from Instagram** as much as possible. Customers shouldn't have to be sent out to a third party to get an answer.

**Avoid directing them to a customer service number, a Facebook chat, or your website.** Links in Instagram comments aren't clickable, and there's no way to copy and paste the links from the comments into a web browser. This makes for a clunky experience for customers.

Instagram for Business has a few features to help you quickly respond to commonly asked questions, like "[Quick Replies](#)," which allows you to save templated answers. Visit [this article](#) for a walkthrough on setting up quick replies.

For a truly seamless customer experience, **link Instagram with your support CRM**. Facebook just launched an [Instagram Messenger API](#) for this specific purpose. The app lets your reps answer DMs directly from the Zendesk support platform, so customers don't have to navigate away from Instagram to get answers.



#### 4. Tap into visual social proof

Showing people how customers are using and enjoying your product encourages them to give your brand a chance.

- **Share user-generated content.** If users mention your product in an Instagram story, use your hashtag, or mention you in a picture, make sure to leverage their endorsement and repost it. Think of it as free advertising with real people, minus the paid actors.
- **Repost screenshots of happy customer comments.** Over [93%](#) of people use online reviews to decide which company to buy from, so make sure your happy customers are front-and-center on your Instagram account. Be sure to mention them or tag them in the photo, too – Instagrammers love free publicity.
- **Share influencer or celeb testimonials.** If you have a celebrity or influencer promoting your brand, make sure to share it on your page. This will not only give you clout but also bring that account's followers to your page.

This [social proof makes your brand more trustworthy](#) to customers. And trusting customers are willing to give your support team the [benefit of the doubt](#) if there's an issue.



#### 5. Stalk your brand mentions

It's not enough to only interact with Instagrammers if they mention your brand or send you a DM. In fact, most people who complain about a brand on social media don't even follow that brand. To provide optimum customer support, you need to be finding and responding to those complaints, too.

Start by **tracking content that's using your brand hashtags**. Search for your hashtag(s) in the top search bar and briefly scan what pops up. This will show you if you're trending or if users are trying to get your attention through a tag rather than a mention.

For the gold standard in social monitoring, **invest in a third-party [social media monitoring tool](#)**. These workhorse tools use social media algorithms to pick up your name anywhere in a profile—even if it's not in a hashtag or mention.

**Instagram is a new and exciting frontier for social media customer service. Use these tips and tricks to get started on the right foot. You'll be instafamous for your fabulous support in no time.**



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