



\$10M in sales from Instagram: Steal from this agent's playbook

Whether you're brand new or you've been using it a while, if you adopt North Carolina agent Heidi Harris' steps for yourself, you'll grow your followers — and your business

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When Heidi Harris moved from a farm in Maryland to Raleigh, North Carolina, she had a tiny [sphere of influence](#). She needed to find people she could share her passion and excitement for real estate with, so she started on [Instagram](#).

As Harris developed her Instagram presence, she focused on real estate, of course, but she also recognized that people are hungry for human stories, so that's what she sought to share. And over the past two years, it has helped her significantly grow her engagement.

"We started out with a couple hundred followers, and I learned," Harris said. "I got business. I networked. It's social media, so I was social on it. And little by little, we've grown follower by follower."

That growth resulted in \$10 million worth of sales in 2020 directly from Instagram. The following is a breakdown of what she did and what you can do to grow your business via Instagram.

And for some IRL examples of what has worked for Harris, watch the video above.

Start by maximizing your profile

1. Begin by making sure your profile creates a great first impression for your audience

If you're just starting out, you can establish your account as a personal account, a business account, or a creator account, though most people will choose either the "personal" or the "business" option. Harris changed to the "creator" option as she became more advanced.

2. Help people connect with you

Ensure people can connect with you from your Instagram account using the link option in [your account profile](#). Although Instagram only allows one website link, there is a workaround.

[Linker.ee](#) allows users to house multiple links via the one link option allowed in Instagram, which helps people to connect with you in various places, such as social media platforms, landing pages, or any other specific locations you'd like them to access.

"I had one friend early in my career that said, 'Gosh, Heidi, I should have used you to be my real estate agent, but I forgot that you're in real estate.' Never again." – Heidi Harris

3. Build a compelling description

For people who don't know you, the description on your page serves as a resume to help them learn more about you. People make decisions on whether or not they follow someone very quickly. Make sure your description draws people in with who you authentically are.

4. Snap an attention-getting photo

Colors like yellow, orange and green grab people's attention, so [take a picture](#) of yourself wearing an eye-catching color for your profile.

Once you've optimized your profile, it's time to work on the type of content that will both entertain and educate your ideal client.

Differentiate your content

The posts on an Instagram account stay there forever unless you delete them, and the [stories](#) are only available for 24 hours unless you add them to your highlights. Build the content on your page so that they'll get something worthwhile if someone does a deep dive, and they'll learn more about you.

For inspiration, find ways to make real estate conversational and approachable. Use the content that provides a takeaway for your audience in your feed so people can always come back to it, and use your stories for storytelling. Position yourself as a resource for your audience.

If you are stumped on what to share, follow agents like Harris, who do it well. Avoid copying what these other agents do unless it fits with who you genuinely are. Use their posts as inspiration to find *your voice* and your audience. Odds are, if specific posts the other agents use intrigue you, then they more than likely will intrigue your ideal customer as well.

The beauty of our current situation is that if you aren't sure how to create a story or a post, YouTube has plenty of videos that can help you gather all the information you need.

Use hashtags

Harris used the power of hashtags to [grow her Instagram account](#), and you can, too. Users often follow certain hashtags related to topics they are interested in, so by using those same hashtags on your content, you'll help new followers find you organically, and you'll increase the odds that they'll engage with your content.

You can use macro hashtags, which have a much bigger reach, and micro hashtags, which have a smaller reach to engage with your audience.

"Social media is a lot about effort, so if I'm putting in the effort; hashtags are a free way to help my audience find me and our services." – Heidi Harris

Raleigh, for example, is a macro hashtag that has been used more than 3 million times on Instagram. Whereas #homesweetheidi, for instance, is a micro one Harris uses.

[Using multiple hashtags](#) provides the opportunity to find your ideal customers organically. You will use many of these hashtags for almost all of your posts.

To save time, iPhone users can use the text replacement feature on their phones to streamline the hashtag process by creating a unique phrase that the phone will recognize as a shortcut for a list of hashtags.

This same feature allows you to create a shortcut so that when you enter the letters OTW, your phone automatically replaces the letters with the full phrase “on the way.”

In this case, if you enter the shortcut #homesinraleigh (using your location in the hashtag), you can program your phone to replace that unique hashtag with a long string of micro and macro hashtags to save you the trouble of typing them every time you post. You can also use the tool Space to accomplish some of the same time-saving steps.

“Social media is a lot about effort, so if I’m putting in the effort; hashtags are a free way to help my audience find me and our services,” Harris said.

Write a powerful first sentence

Instagram is a platform built on algorithms, so you’ll get better results if you prompt people to engage with your content, either by reading, sharing, liking or commenting on your posts.

As a first step, you can write a great first sentence and then use a hard return after that opening sentence.

Doing this ensures that the only thing people see when scrolling is the first sentence and the “more” button that reveals the rest of the text on the post. By creating first sentences that entices people to click the “more” button to read the rest of the post, you will have increased the engagement and moved your post up Instagram’s algorithm for more organic promotion.

Post Instagram content consistently

Your goal is to keep yourself and your team in front of people so that when they think of real estate, they’ll think of you.

“I had one friend early in my career that said, ‘Gosh, Heidi, I should have used you to be my real estate agent, but I forgot that you’re in real estate.’ Never again,” she said.

There are multiple ways to create content on Instagram, including stories, posts, Reels and IGTV. [Reels are short videos](#), and [IGTV](#) allows you to post videos longer than 60 seconds.

The two basic ways to create engagement on Instagram are through stories and posts. Again, stories only stay on your page for 24 hours unless you put them in your highlights. These are the posts most people do on the fly throughout the day. Think of it as telling the story of your day.

The posts are your highlights. These stay on your page forever unless you delete them. If someone does a deep dive on your page, these posts will give them a better feel of who you are. Make sure the stories on your page are compelling, and encourage people to want to follow you. These should be engaging, entertaining and educational.

Build an audience

Harris started with virtually no followers, and she built her audience up to the current number of 2,853 over several years. To some, that may sound like a lot of followers, and to others, not that many.

The fact that Harris closed more than \$10 million worth of sales volume directly from Instagram with just 2,853 followers should be encouraging. With the strategies Harris shared, anyone can build their ideal audience.

No matter how many people you have following you today, start using hashtags and relevant content to generate engagement. You don't have to pursue people in an attempt to get people to follow you. Add value to your audience authentically, and you can grow your following.

Harris said that if she had known in 2017 how much money she could make off of a free platform and a little bit of effort, her mind would have been blown.

"Making the effort to do it has changed my family," she said. "It has given me more confidence. There's no reason not to do it. Just put forth a little effort every day, and it's social media, so make it social."

Whether you're brand new to Instagram or you've been using it for a while, if you adopt these steps for yourself, you'll grow your number of followers, and your business will grow along with it. We're in this business to impact people, and Instagram can help us do precisely that.

For more on these strategies, watch Heidi Harris and Jimmy Burgess discuss them in the video above. To see exactly how Harris utilizes these strategies, [check out her Instagram](#).

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