

INSTAGRAM

A GUIDE FOR RAPID GROWTH

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We all crave it. We all secretly (or not) desire to succeed on Social Media and become the next viral sensation. The first step in any task is the willingness to accept and acknowledge what you want. You must be able to say to yourself confidently, and others, "I am not ashamed to want fame." Saying you don't want to see the little hearts of Instagram float in or see 100's of comments on your post is counterproductive. If you want it, own it. It is not vain or wrong to derive a sense of happiness from what you are working hard for. If you do not want this, then you probably clicked on the incorrect link. And if you are still reading this and thinking that you do not want to have lots of "likes" or be noticed, then please re-read the above about owning your choices. If you do these steps listed below half-ass, you are probably still going to have a half-ass account. Just like everything else in life, it is all about what you are willing to put into something to make it amazing. Rarely does everything just fall into place, and to become an overnight sensation is usually takes oh, 1000's of overnight hours of work.

Now "fame" can mean multiple things: social status, sponsorships, speaking engagements, local recognition, personal growth, and much more. The word "fame" can be interchanged with many actions and goals, and it can and should morph throughout your journey. Fame is very subjective and very personal. One of the hardest lessons for me was learning for as many people want to help you make it, the same amount wants to make sure you do not. This is the reason why the "why" must be for you and you alone. You cannot let others detract from that.

Some of this stuff may feel rude or abrasive to you. I do not mean it that way, and it is only here to offer you a no-bullshit way of making Social Media work for you instead of you working for Social Media. I went from 2k followers in October 2018 to 60k (and growing), my own White Label Epoxy line, teaching Nationally, Sponsors and sharing my journey all within 18 months. You can, too.

Ready? Let us get started.

WE ALL HAVE TO START SOMEWHERE

In 2017 I was sitting in my truck waiting for my then 14-year-old daughter to get out of physical therapy. I was wondering what I was going to do with my life when she turned 18. My whole identity had been wrapped up in raising my children, and here I was, looking at the youngest one entering High School. I had started Crow Creek Designs a year prior, but due to my health collapsing, I had put it not only on hold but

had resigned myself to the fact that it wasn't in the cards for me to own a business. I remember sitting there, feeling sorry for myself and wondering what the heck I was going to do. How could I still create and, more importantly, how could I get paid to create? I was aware of Facebook, and I knew that Instagram was something, but I thought hashtags were things that my girls did to annoy me in texting for the most part.

In September 2017, I did my first Instagram post. It was a project I had done for a military family in honor of the husband. The original post had no hashtags, no location tags, nothing. I just assumed my 25 followers

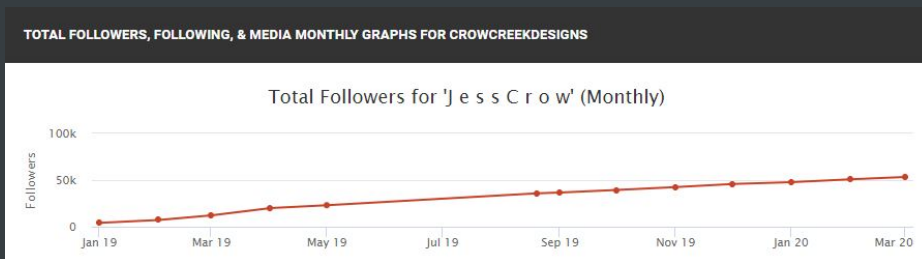


would seed the world with it and bam! Instafame would be mine....

Guess what? It did not work. The following month, October 2, to be exact, I did another post. Again, this one had no hashtags and 55 likes. The next month I decided to up my game—I would post four times. Still, no hashtags and between 25-60 little hearts managed to come my way. I kept up this process for a few months, stuck in the stubborn ways that somehow me doing nothing to earn the love was simply Social

Medias fault, or at the very least, the fault of everyone else who was doing so well with far less (presumed) work. We can flash forward now that you have an idea of my humble beginnings because frankly, I sucked, and I sucked at it gloriously!

ZERO TO 60K+ FOLLOWERS AT BREAKNECK SPEED



I would love to tell you I went "viral" and gained thousands of followers overnight. That the internet Gods sang my name across the globe, and I was the next big thing. Here it comes, ...but. I was not. I have had

some great performing posts, and I have had many people steal my work and claim it as their own, but I have not gone viral yet. Once I found my stride and the tips and tricks I am going to share with you, I have maintained 1,000 – 2,500 new followers a week (on average.)

How did I grow my account so fast then? Get ready to groan as this word is tossed around a lot when it comes to every single Instagram growth "hack."

Authentic Engagement.

What makes what I am going to tell you different from 90% of other articles and YouTube videos you may have investigated is simple: I am going to walk you step by step through how to do this, without spending 23.5 hours a day on Social Media and without paying \$999.99 (but wait, there is more!) I will cut that payment down to \$599.99 for this one-time special fee...

Please (insert eye roll)

Instead, I am going to tell you a fair chunk of it for free.

1. NIX THE KIDS AND THE FOOD...

Here is the deal plain and simple—we do not care about what you ate for supper. We are here to see what you made/wore/listened to/traveled too/and your cute puppies—whatever it is that drew us to your account in the first place. Now, if your account is about food, then this example does not count. But you catch my drift?

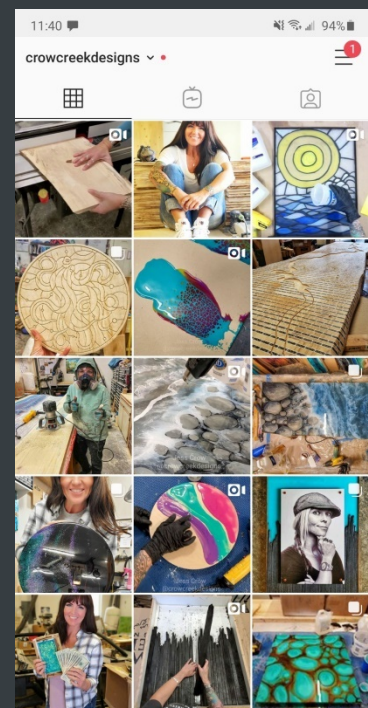
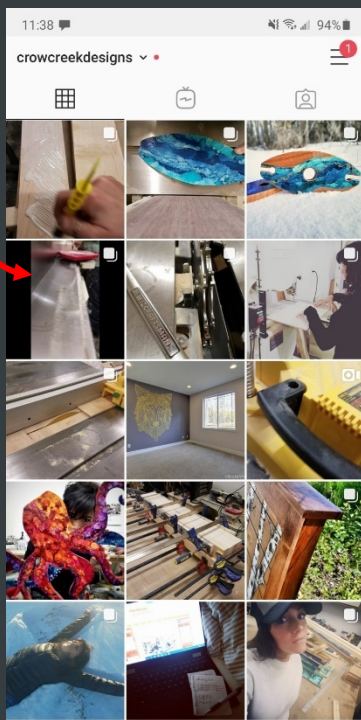
This can be a hard pill to swallow right out of the gate. One thing that has been a common denominator amongst folks I have helped is the chaos of their feed. I had it myself! I spend a lot of

time going through random feeds looking for the moment that people "got it." You can easily see it if you know what you are looking for. The pictures become more apparent in meaning, the shots more thought out (and this is true even if it appears more random), and there is an overall flow.

The first picture here is my account then, and now. You can see that it is just is not that neat to look at. What is that middle bottom picture? What am I looking at in the left-hand second one down? What possibly is going to grab someone's attention within a millisecond and want them to follow me?

Am I saying do not create and post what you want? No, not at all. What I am saying is be consistent. If you're going to post 100 random items a day, that is great. Consistency can come from using the same angle, the same filter, the same font on the picture. Find cohesiveness with the majority of your posts, and the rest will fall into place.

Huh?



2. PERSONAL? CREATOR? BUSINESS?

Do you want to sell items and link to them via your Facebook page? Business account.

Do you want the music button and the ability to dive deep into analytics? Creator account.

Do you want to limit who follows you? Personal account.

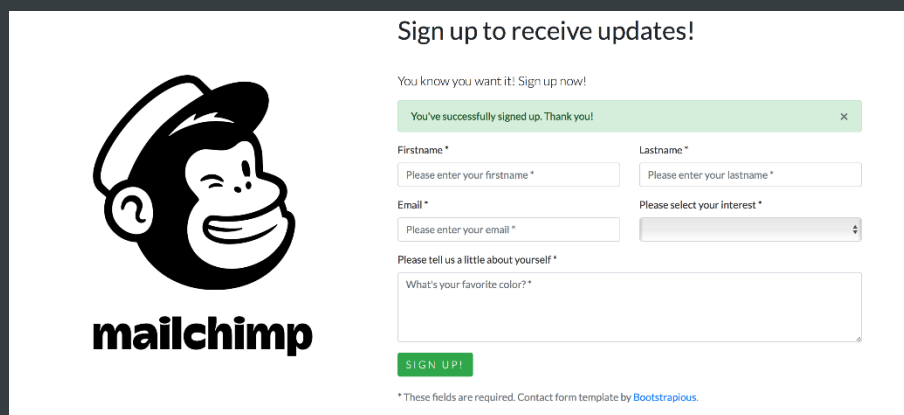
This is the quick outline, and there is a lot of cross over items between a business account and creator account, and I wish the two would be mashed together, to be honest. If you are planning on working with companies down the line, you will need either a business or a creator account. Some brands will have you do "paid partnership with..." when you post, while others will want screenshots showing how the post performed.

3. DO NOT GIVEAWAY ALL YOUR KNOWLEDGE FOR FREE, EVER.

There is a delicate balance between being helpful to others and hurtful to yourself. When I first started, I felt I needed to answer every single DM and request for help. Be useful but set a limit. Especially if part of your brand will be to teach. A great compromise is to create a boilerplate template to address the most common FAQ. If you are answering questions like "what tools should I start with?" or "What finish do you use?" these are all questions you can answer with a template effectively. Now, here is where answering one suddenly turns into you have helped with a full project. "I brought the tool you suggested, but I am getting a rough finish with it. Do you know what I am doing wrong?" or "I applied the oil you recommended, and it is not drying properly. Should I sand it off and try again?"

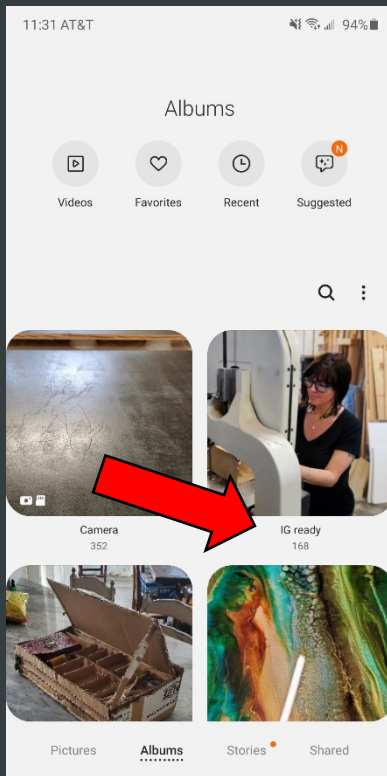
STOP!

This is where you direct them to your website and the tutorial that you have created covering proper use/application and what to do if something goes sideways. Even if it is a free tutorial, have them sign up to be on your mailing list. Companies will ask if you have a mailing list and if you can promote their product if you end up working together. Now that free tutorial has value.



The image shows a screenshot of a Mailchimp sign-up form. On the left is the Mailchimp logo, which features a cartoon monkey wearing a white sailor's cap and the word "mailchimp" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. To the right of the logo is the sign-up form. The form has a white background and is titled "Sign up to receive updates!". Below the title, it says "You know you want it! Sign up now!". There is a green success message that says "You've successfully signed up. Thank you!". The form contains several input fields: "Firstname *" with a placeholder "Please enter your firstname *", "Lastname *" with a placeholder "Please enter your lastname *", "Email *" with a placeholder "Please enter your email *", and "Please select your interest *" with a dropdown menu. Below these is a text area labeled "Please tell us a little about yourself *" with a placeholder "What's your favorite color?*" and a "SIGN UP!" button. At the bottom, there is a small asterisk note: "* These fields are required. Contact form template by Bootstrapious."

4. CREATE CONTENT A 10-14 DAYS IN ADVANCE



This was such an epiphany for me. And a silly one. I would stare at my phone every morning, wondering what to post and struggle to come up with a witty headliner. Now maybe you are sitting there laughing going "duh, Jess!" but it is missed for a lot of folks. I build for a living and did not have content for Social Media. If I remembered to stop and take a photo frequently, it was a half thought out piece of crap that I would just throw online. Hello, 30 little hearts. Once I got fed up with this tactic, I started what I refer to as **Content Days**. These were scheduled times that I allotted 1-2 hours a week of strictly making content for Social Media. These were all projects I was working on, but I took the time to take in focus, creative shots. I paid attention to how things were laid out and presented. I did any editing and wrote myself a quick note about what was going on in the photo.

Unless I am doing a structured, sponsored post, I still write my post the day of and from the hip. But having content at the ready not only reduced my anxiety about posting, but it also gave me a solid feel of what was working to post, and what was not.

5. HOW MANY TIMES A DAY OR WEEK SHOULD I POST?

Consistency is Queen. Repeat that. I highly suggest posting 1-2 times a day, and at the same time every day. Here is why this is helpful; it creates a rhythm for you, it builds anticipation for your viewers, and the algorithm loves it! Instagram works best when it is fed, so you need to feed it. Consistent, creative, and engaging posts are one of the essential aspects of rapid growth.

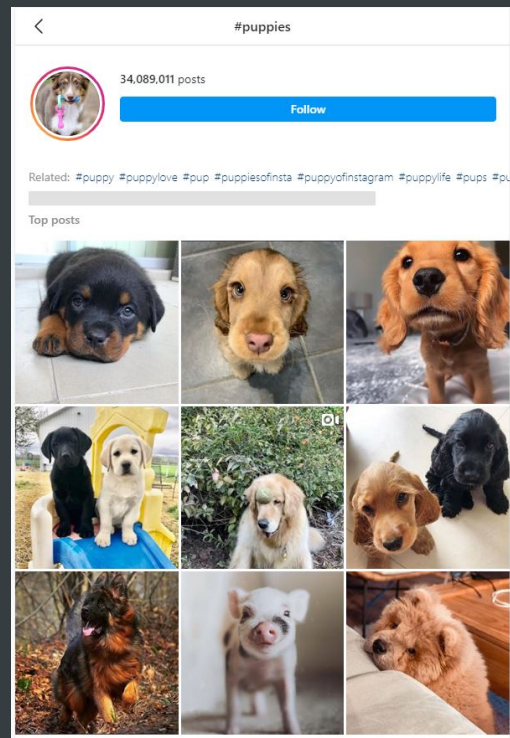
6. IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

Now that we have got the basics of what, where, and when let's talk about how we get them to notice us. This part is the Authentic Engagement aspect that brings it all together. Without this component, most of the above will still work, but not as good.

You will need to have a basic idea of the hashtags you are interested in. These are going to be hashtags that are related to what you are selling or doing. For instance, a woodworking feed may have hashtags along the lines of #woodworking, #finefinishes #sanding #lumber #drills, etc.

Whereas a beauty site may include #beautifulpeople #makeup #allnatural #smoothskin and the like. Once you have identified the hashtags you want to be seen in, it is time to go fishing. Head to the hashtag and genuinely comment on the top 15-20 of each hashtag that is in your scope. Do this in both the "Top" posts and the "Recent" ones, too. You want to do this every single day. Yes, every single day. You will not have to do it forever, but you need to devote 30-40 minutes once or twice a day to this task in the beginning to establish yourself.

The reasoning behind this is finding your "tribe." When you have a tribe you all work together for a greater good. This is the equivalency of making friends online. Therefore, **it is so important to be genuine and honest.** Do not just leave lame comments on something you do not like or are not interested in. You are knocking on someone's door and hoping to strike up a conversation. Maybe they will be like, "Oh, hey, that was a nice comment. I wonder what their feed looks like?" If they like what they see, then you may have a new friend find their way to you.



When you share their work, they are more likely to share your work. Whatever that work may be. Far too often, we forget that if we have a tribe that grows with us, we grow faster and better. Higher engagement rates and more interactions happen because you are vested in them, and they in you.

7. BE A BALLERINA

Do not be afraid to be a ballerina and pivot. If something is not working, change it up. If you decide you want to niche down and focus on a specific area of your account, do it! Look at it this way for a second: If everyone in your niche is painting white shiplap walls and you are painting white shiplap walls, what makes you stand out? Is it because you like to walk around with a bright orange ascot, but you have been unsure if people would "want" that part of you? YES!!! That is what would make you stand out! Are you a builder, and you have a unique way of doing something that you don't put in front of the camera because "no one else is doing it and I want to impress the sponsor Joe over there has" STOP! These are the things that will get you noticed, and frequently it takes a little while to figure out what your *weird* is.

Pivoting is not always done to adhere to rules or changes. Pivoting can be done to make a new set of rules and lead a change.

WHAT NOW?

DO YOU REMEMBER #3?

What I have outlined for you above is a strong and sturdy foundation to build your Instagram account. Is there more that you would like to know? I know I did...

If you are interested in these next key points I do, in fact, have two onetime paid offers for you. Click on the box for more information and checkout.

ACQUAINTANCES

- How to reach out, and obtain Sponsors
- Hashtags and how to maximize them for growth
- Targeting similar accounts and sharing their audience
- Paid ads and explosive growth
- FREE MEDIA KIT EXAMPLE

\$19.99
one-time payment

CLOSE FRIENDS

- How to reach out, and obtain Sponsors
- Hashtags and how to maximize them for growth
- Targeting similar accounts and sharing their audience
- Paid ads and explosive growth
- Full review of your account with 30-minute bonus facetime coaching session
- FREE MEDIA KIT EXAMPLE & REVIEW

\$59.99
one-time payment

You have already learned a lot with what I have lined out above. I hope that you can take these words and start feeling a sense of accomplishment as you see the results start rolling in. If you do not want to do what I did and spend 6-8 months learning just that much more let me help! I have interviewed companies and asked them what they are looking for, I have had the pleasure of talking to some of the leading accounts on growth and engagement, and finally I am invested in seeing you succeed.

Jess