



# the Reward guide:



to an effective  
Instagram Reel  
Strategy

# Short-form video is king.

It was **Vine** first, then **Musical.ly** that popularised the short video format, but it wasn't really until the **COVID-19 pandemic** that short-form video **truly went viral**. TikTok and Instagram reels are now widely more popular than just static images in the feed. It is time that brands caught up with the trend and saw the benefit of creating reels offers a tremendous social media growth potential for their companies.

At Reward, we have been creating Instagram Reels & Tik Tok videos for a while now. As with anything in marketing, you can't jump in head first, you have to create a **strategy** for your work to be truly effective. In this blog, we have collated our top tips and tricks that can help you create an effective Instagram Reel Strategy.



# Instagram is no longer a photo sharing platform

On the 30th of June, Instagram's CEO Adam Mosseri announced on his **Instagram** and **Twitter** accounts that Instagram is **no longer just a photo-sharing platform**. As mentioned in our opening paragraph, the popularity of photo and text-based content has slowly been overtaken by video. Instagram, rightfully so, wants to capitalise on this. In the tech world, it has always been **'improvise, adapt and overcome'**. To be able to stay popular, Instagram has realised that it

needs to become more like its competitors, like Tik Tok, and focus more on video. Video is now both their tool for users acquisition and user retention.

This is not the first time Instagram has copied/borrowed from a competitor. Their shift away from simply photo-sharing app began in 2016 when they adapted Snapchat stories into what we now know as **Instagram stories**. That is why it wasn't such a surprise when **in late 2020 they came out**

**with Reels**, their direct answer to Tik Tok's short-form video-creation platform.

Since Instagram has decided to take their app in this direction, we as marketers and brands need to follow suit if we want to stay relevant, and discoverable. Instagram Reels need to be part of your content strategy in order to achieve growth for your brand in social media.



# Why is it important to include reels in your social strategy?

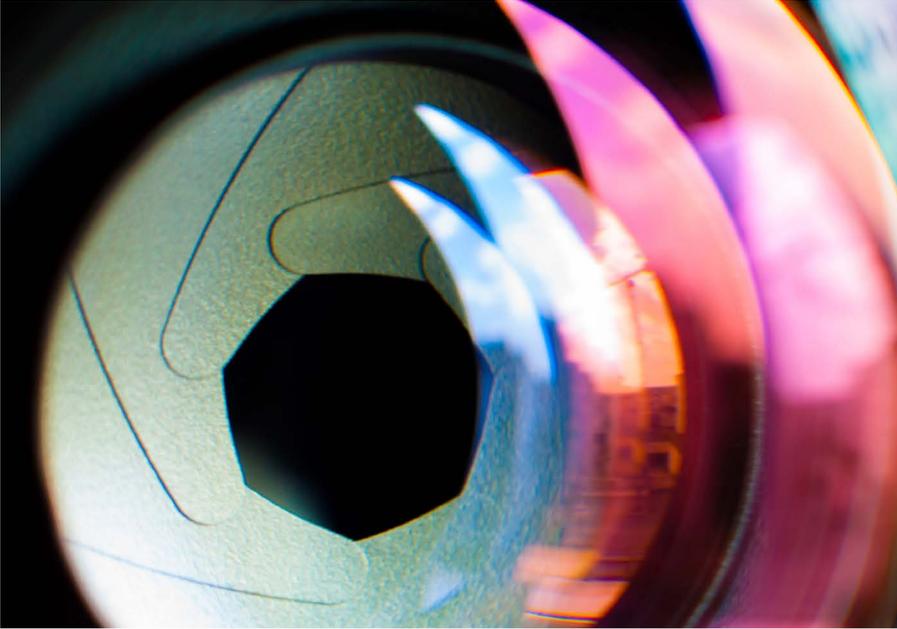


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Instagram recently announced that it is **testing a new algorithm** that will be pushing suggested posts/reels in front of your friends' posts. This will give accounts a greater chance at visibility and exposure. It would be foolish not to take advantage of this.

Including reels in your marketing strategy is a great idea for a variety of reasons. First, Reels allow you to be more creative than with photos and stories because it offers in-app editing options, voice-over, the addition of music, subtitles and the ability to tag your products.

With Reels, you also have a higher chance of **going viral**, or setting a trend than you have with just simple feed posts. **Users have been known to go viral** and start careers just by lending their music to reels and TikTok videos or by creating dances that got replicated by millions. Who wouldn't want that for themselves or their brand?



# Strategy

So now that we've convinced you that you need reels in your strategy, here is how you create one, specifically for Reels. If you follow the steps, you can guarantee that you will be creating videos that are going to be popular within your niche.

## 1. Do a competitor analysis

Competitor analysis is at the core of many marketing strategies not just in social media. Knowing what your competitors are doing can be a key to helping you differentiate yourself and identify gaps in the market, where your competitors are not visible, yet.

So how do you do competitor analysis on Reels you ask?

It's fairly easy. If you have done marketing planning before, you are bound to have a list of competitors. Look them up on Instagram, see if they are using Reels at all, and if they do, see what type of content they are posting. Do the same on TikTok too. After that, check out the #hashtags you are using, Instagram will then show you Reels that include the hashtag you've

searched for. This way, you can see what everyone else who is not necessarily your direct competitor but is in the wider field of your industry is posting.

## 2. Set goals

Once you've discovered what type of reels your industry is interested in, you need to set some goals.

What do you want to achieve with posting reels?

Up until a few weeks ago, there were no insights into reels, so most strategies might have chosen to

omit goals from their strategy, just because they did not have a way of tracking metrics. But **now that insights are available for Reels**, we can set goals such as:

- Target engagement rate
- Target reach
- Target views and many more.

# 3. Choose your video formats

When it comes to videos, we suggest you come categorise them into the following 4 categories.

→ **Authentic**

These are reels that are authentic to your company and to your brand. These are the hardest to replicate by competitors. Q&A's are also part of authentic content.

→ **Showcase**

Showcase is the category for you to introduce yourself and your product/service to your audience. This is where you can highlight the benefits of your products and also its differences from the competition. If you have an Instagram shop you can also tag products in your Reels.,

An example would be something **like this**.

→ **Educational content**

Educational content can either be 'How to'-type videos where you show off your product and what it can do or videos where you let the audience in-on the history of your brand and product/service. This can also include, behind the scenes and 'how it's made'-type videos too.

An example would be something **like this**.

→ **Memes/Trends**

Lastly, Reels trends and memes will give you the highest chance of going viral. These are albeit easier to do if you are not a business account. If you are creating branded content you need to be aware that you cannot use copyrighted music or it can result in your business account getting suspended or even deleted.

# 4. Create a posting schedule

Step 4 is figuring out when to film and edit your Reels. When studying marketing, most of us were not expecting to be placed in a videographer/host role in our careers. Hence why the first couple of times you film your reels, it might take longer than you anticipated. The same thing might happen during editing, it will take longer the first couple of times, but I can tell you that you will find the right rhythm.

Be mindful of how you can integrate Reels into your social media strategy. If you work in an

agency, definitely get your clients' permission before starting to film reels for them. If you are paid by the hour for your work by the client, you might need to kindly ask them to raise their budget so you could incorporate Reels into their account's posting schedule.

Also, make sure that you create connections between your feed posts & reels. If you are saying one thing on your feed, don't say the opposite in a Reel.

# 5. Film your reels

The second to last step is to actually film your Reels. We recommend setting some time aside and filming a bigger batch of content that can be drip-fed through your feed for the next couple of weeks. We know that trends/memes cannot be predicted, so you still might need to do some ad-hoc filming from time to time.

I would also suggest writing a shot-list of everything you want to film, and if you are going to be talking, I would recommend that you write a script as well. This will help you keep track of what you've filmed and what you want to say.

Some of you might be intimidated by the production value of some of the Reels on Instagram. But the truth is, all you need is your phone to get started. You no longer need studio-lights and expensive cameras. This is what **Rachel Karten**, former Social Media Manager at Bon Appétit magazine calls **scrappy content**.

If after a while you still want to up the ante on your production value, here are a few things that could help your Reels set-up:



## → Tripod

Using a **tripod** will open a whole new world of possibilities for your Reels. You can film yourself doing a variety of things, where holding the camera might not be possible, or you want to show something to the audience that requires both your hands. Finally, using a tripod will allow you to create smoother, less shaky videos.

## → Ring Light

A **ring light** can also be a great addition to your Reels set-up. Reels are human-centric, and we want to portray ourselves in the best light possible, literally. If your apartment doesn't get a lot of sunlight, or you want to film at night, a ring light a must-have for Reels creation. Combine this with a tripod and you already have levelled up your production value. (Ps.: Sometimes a tripod and a ring light are bundled together.)

## → Microphone

Using the built-in microphone to your phone is fine, especially if you can plug in a pair of earphones and use the built-in microphone to do your voiceovers. But in windy conditions, or if your phone is not the latest and best iPhone, the built-in microphone in your phone might result in scratchy and or quiet sounds.

Adding a **lapel/lavalier** mic that you can plug into the phone, or a shotgun microphone with a dead cat plugged into your phone can add a layer of quality to your videos.

## → Gimbal

Last but not least, if you are filming a lot of movement, consider upgrading your tripod to a three-axis gimbal. These gimbals will help you capture buttery smooth footage of movement. Some three axis-gimbals, like the **DJI OM4** have built-in tracking in them, so if you are creating the videos alone, the phone can follow you around as you move, while filming.

For further tips on what gear you could get to pimp your reels set-up, I recommend you check out this **video** and this **video**, by **Mobile Motion**.

## 6. Reporting

After you've posted a couple of videos you'll start getting some data for the goals you've set at the beginning. Make sure to use the Insights function on your Instagram page to see which type of reels are currently working for you. Use the data to influence your next filming day, so that you could create Reels your audience wants to see.

If you are working at an agency, or in-house use the data gathered to win more time to work on Reels, and to back up your claims that using Reels could work for the brand.

## What to look out for when you are using it as a business:

Now that you have your full-fledged Instagram Reels Strategy, you are almost ready to go and start posting on your account.

But before you do there are a couple of things you need to be aware of in the context of Reels, that might be a dealbreaker for you.

Currently, Instagram does not allow you to pre-schedule Reels. You can save drafts in the app, but they won't be automatically published unless you press the 'Publish' button.

This is the same reason that except **Sked Social**, no other Social Media Scheduling Software offers Reels scheduling as an option. We hope that this will soon change, but until then, Reels need to be published manually.

Secondly, Reels Insights are only available within the app, since they only came out late May, Social Media Scheduling Softwares have not yet had the chance to include it in their reports. So if you do use Later.com, AgoraPulse or something else, be mindful that the data you see will not yet include data from Reels.

On the other hand, be aware that using copyrighted music, which is very popular with trends, could get your account banned for copyright infringement. Also, if you have a TikTok account, then do not upload a video to TikTok and then upload the same video with the TikTok watermark to Instagram. Instagram's algorithm is smart enough to recognise that watermark and stop the spread of your reel.

Last but not least, **Instagram has announced that advertising will be coming to Reels**, and just like on TikTok you will be able to either sponsor a Reel or upload an entirely new video with the purpose of it being used as an ad on Reels.



→ I hope  
you find  
this list  
useful.

Reels are quite new so there is no set rulebook to play from. If you have any questions please feel free to get in touch with us at [hello@rewardagency.co.uk](mailto:hello@rewardagency.co.uk), or if you want reels for your brand, but you don't have the time or the resources to do so, book a discovery call with us [here](#).



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