

# Basics of Instagram for Small Businesses

In today's digital world, entrepreneurs (like you!) have the opportunity to expand their reach with the use of social media: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and more. The days of the ever time-consuming door-to-door sales and sole word-of-mouth advertising are gone.

Expanding your digital footprint will enable your potential customers and other interested parties (think local news stations or local entrepreneur-empowering organizations like us) to more easily find your business. It helps customers understand what your business is all about, and allows you to establish a platform to more personally connect with your customers.

This tutorial is the first part of an Instagram mini-series: it will take you through the basics of building and setting up an Instagram account for your business.

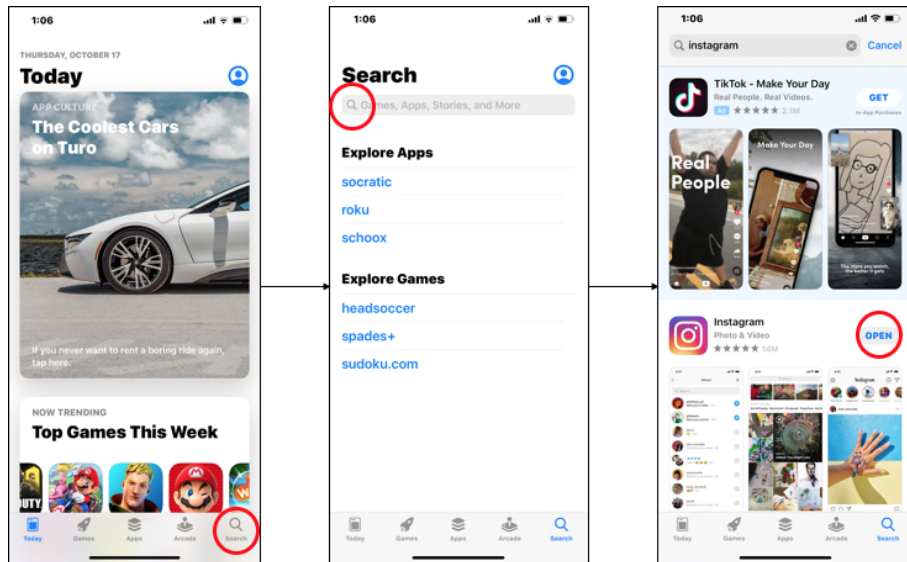
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# Account Set-Up

## How to create an Instagram account:

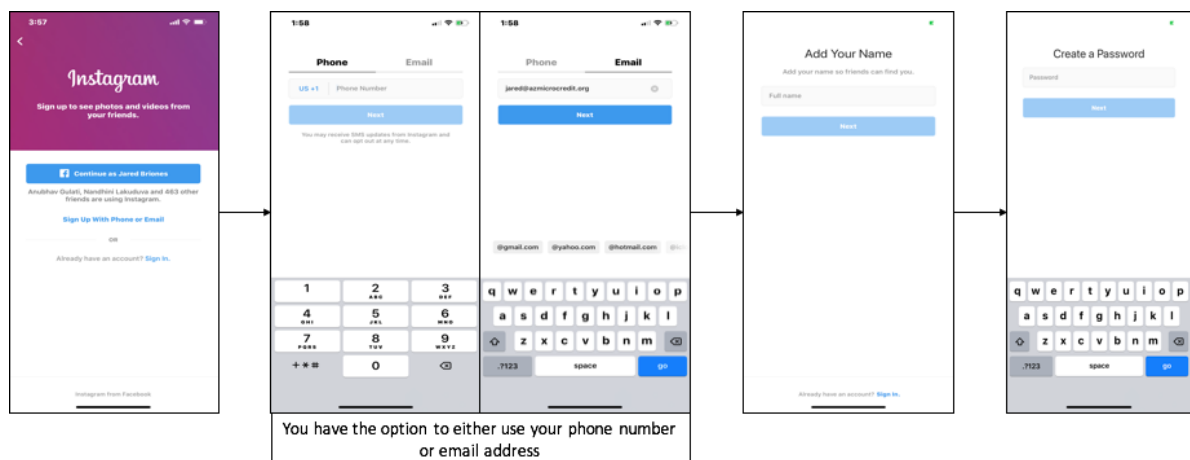
**Step 1:** Go to your smart device's app store, look up Instagram, and download. Use the red circles as a guide if needed.



If you already have a personal profile, great! However, let's make a second account specifically for your business.

**Step 2:** Select an email and password that you will remember and use often. Select a username that should clearly reflect your business, such as your business name if its not already taken. (Hint: if it is already taken, try adding "AZ" to the end of it!)

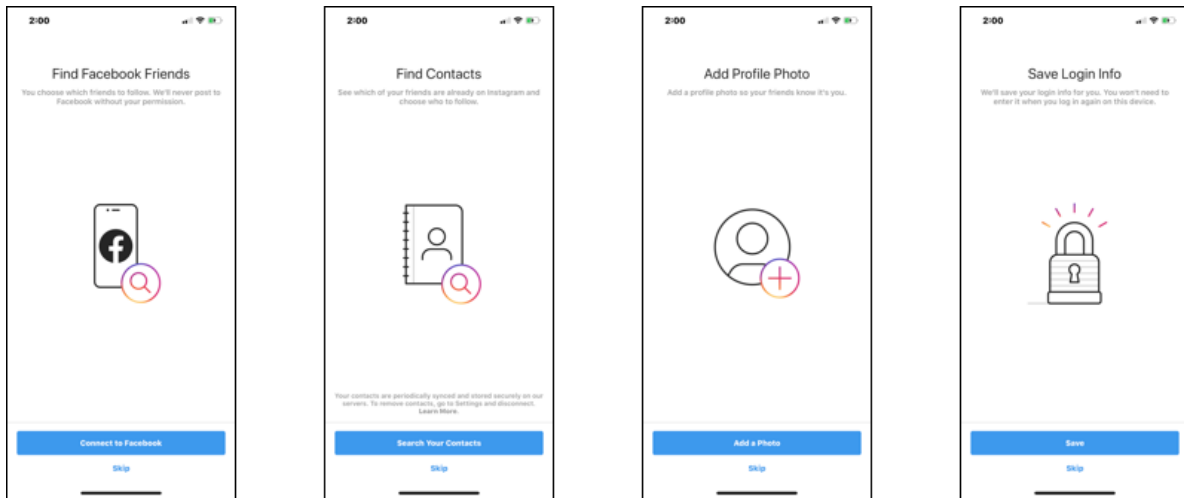
Tip: Unless your business has a number, try to refrain from using numbers in your username. For example, our Instagram is @azmicrocredit, not @ami480.



You have the option to either use your phone number or email address

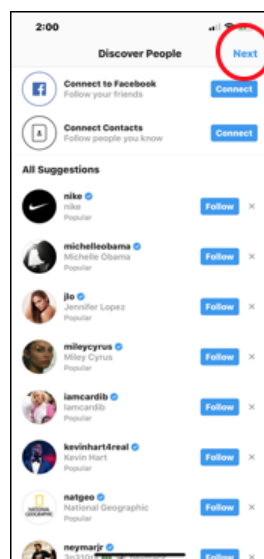


### Step 3: Upload a profile picture—this should be a picture of your company logo.

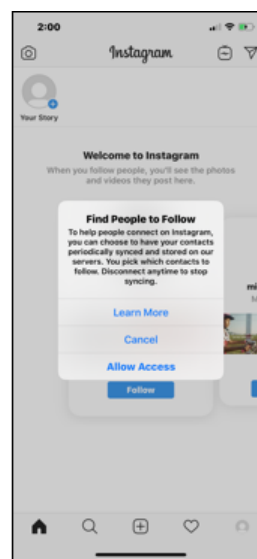


Once your account information is created, you will be prompted with some of the following options. If you have contacts with any current or potential customers, it would be a great idea to let them know you have created an Instagram! Also, you should upload a profile picture of your company logo.

### Step 4: Lastly, you will be taken to your account where you may once again be prompted to sync contacts and/or be given suggestions on accounts to follow.



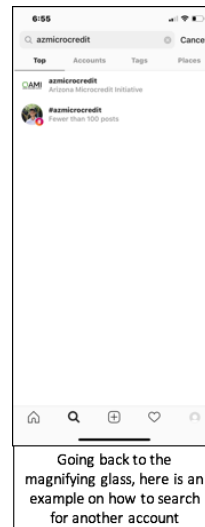
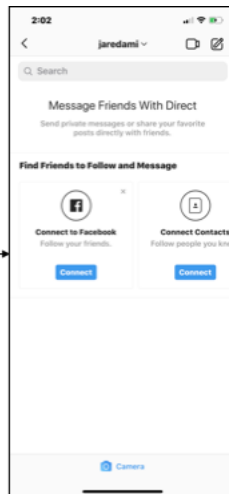
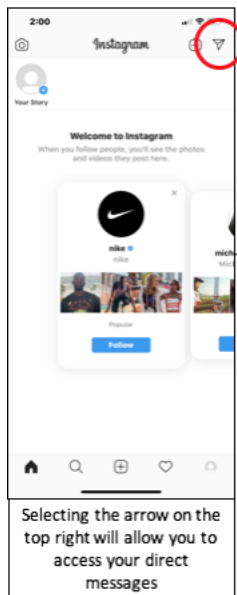
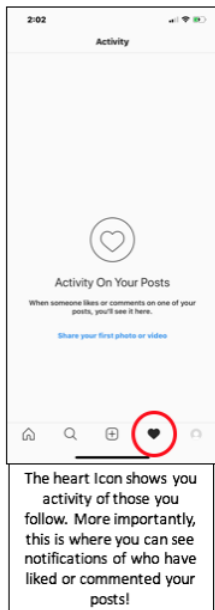
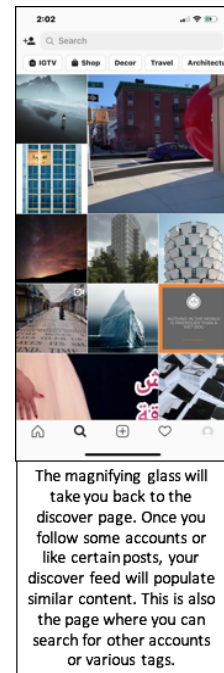
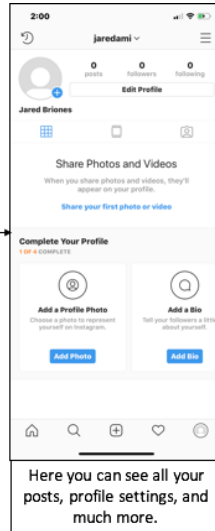
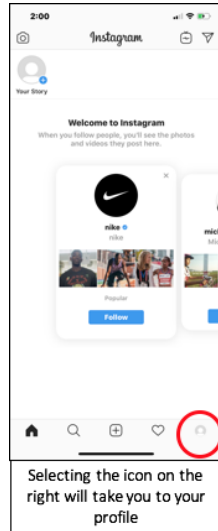
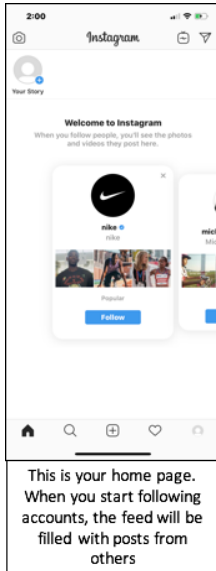
This page shows a list of recommended accounts to follow. However, for the purposes of your business we can do this manually, so click next.



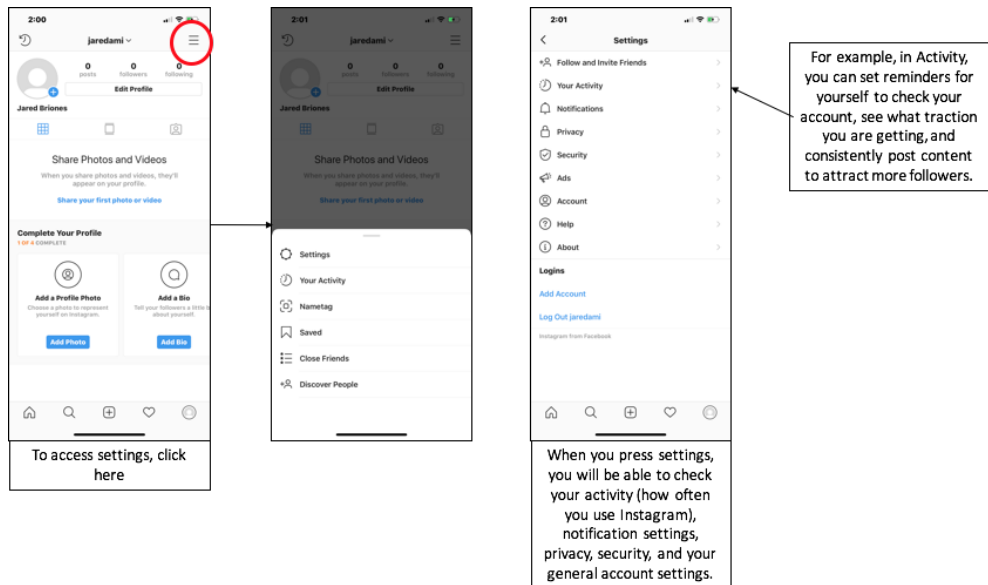
Syncing your contacts is optional. If you feel like you have people who would be interested in your Instagram account, feel free to do so.



# How to Navigate Instagram

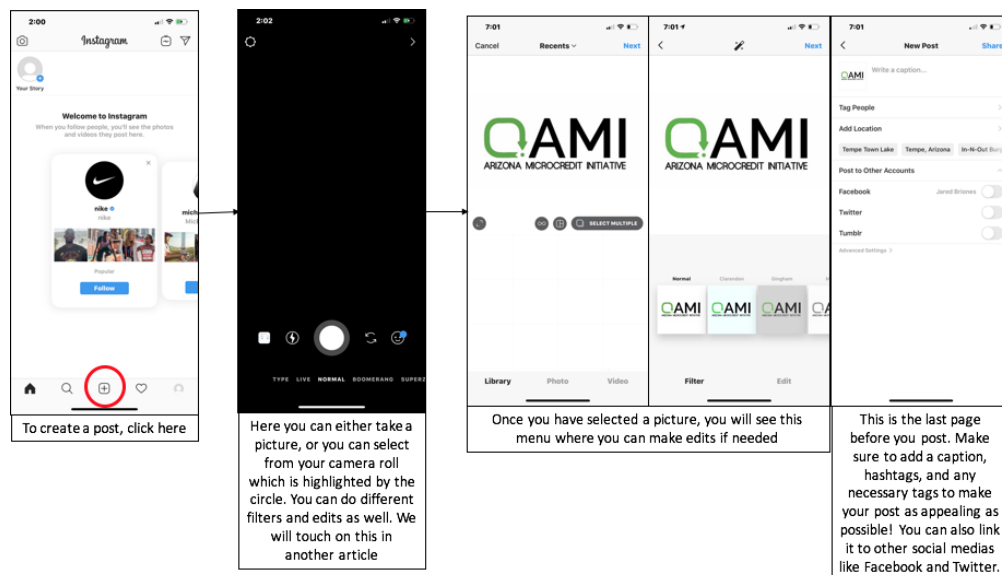


## Setting up Notifications



## How to Post

### Posting on your Page



The next section of this article, “Content Creation Tips,” details what you should post specifically.



## Posting on your Story

What is an Instagram Story? Unlike a regular post, an Instagram Story only lasts for 24 hours. You can use this to your advantage by posting about special daily deals or events your business is participating in.

Posting on your story is the same process as a normal post, except you will click on the top left icon labeled “Your Story”.

## Content Creation Tips

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### Branding Your Business

#### **Define your brand.**

What is at the core of your business? What are your business’s values and mission? What do your customers value, and who is your target demographic? These questions can guide how you think about your business.

If you run a food business that is centered around delicious meals with a fun and vibrant community, you can showcase your food with bold colors. Occasionally show gatherings of people centered around your food. If your business is driven by your team and your employees, feel free to showcase your team members and write about the awesome work that they’re doing!

\*insert example\*

#### **Take and edit great pictures.**

Although you don’t need to be a professional photographer to run an Instagram, it still helps to have clear, quality photos. Make sure that your photos are lit properly, not blurry, and focus on the subject that you want your customers to see.

\*insert example\*

#### **Create compelling captions.**

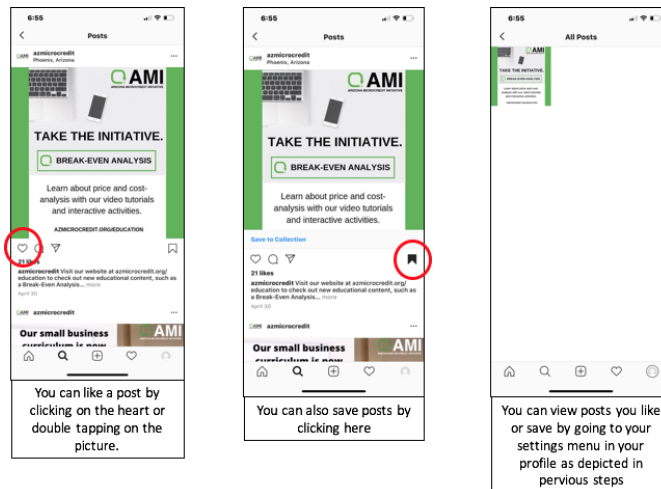
Tell a story through your caption—it makes the photo more meaningful, and if your picture needs a bit of explanation, the caption can give your potential customers clarification of what is in the photo. Captions can carry your personality—make them anywhere from punny, whimsical, down-to-earth, informative.

\*Insert example\*



# Building an Audience

## Liking, Commenting, Following



Instagram is not just about the content that you produce: it's about the community that you establish on the platform. To begin growing and expanding your Instagram audience, one simple trick is to Like and Comment on the posts of related IG users, and even Follow them as well.

For example, if your business is located in the Phoenix area, you can follow @downtownphoenix, @downtownchandler, @downtowntempe, and other cities' pages. If your business sells food, then you can follow Arizona-specific food instagrams (such as @azfoodie) to start building the base of users you follow.

Interacting with closely-affiliated accounts will help others (your potential customers!) in the community find your business through their Instagram pages as well.

## Hashtags

Another way to build your audience is to search and follow hashtags in addition to using them in your post.

What is a #hashtag? A hashtag is a keyword phrase with a pound sign in front of it, and it helps to label and identify your post. It helps other Instagram users find your content easily on that same topic—for example, if you have a food business in Arizona, you can utilize #AZfood #Phoenixfoodie to help steer traffic towards your post.



## Additional Resources

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AMI will be continuing our Instagram mini-series to help you establish the best Instagram presence for your small business.

In the meantime, we've curated a list of some of the best articles that you can continue to read to improve your business's digital presence.

### General Business Instagram Tips

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-use-instagram-for-business/>

<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/instagram-for-business/>

### Content Creation

<https://www.hopperhq.com/blog/produce-epic-instagram-content/>

<https://blog.iconosquare.com/create-quality-instagram-content/>

### Instagram Stories

<https://later.com/blog/instagram-stories-for-business/>

### Instagram Analytics

<https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2018/11/01/instagram-analytics>

<https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/4-ways-to-use-instagram-insights-to-improve-marketing/>

### Instagram Advertisements

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-ads-guide/>

## About AMI: Contact Us

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Arizona Microcredit Initiative is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that strives to empower the underserved entrepreneurs around the Phoenix valley through business instruction, microloans, and consulting.

If you have any questions or comments about the article/want to learn more about how to leverage the digital world for your small business, please feel free to contact AMI at [info@azmicrocredit.org](mailto:info@azmicrocredit.org).

Subscribe to our newsletter to keep updated on the Instagram mini-series and receive more educational material for your small business!

