

4-Week Instagram Upgrade Plan for Veterinary Clinics

Danielle K. Lambert



Take your Instagram from drab to fab with a simple checklist and 4-week challenge!



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part 1

WHY INSTAGRAM?

Why Instagram?

You're about to take the plunge into creating an amazing Instagram account for your veterinary clinic.

Here are Danielle's quick thoughts on why that's exciting...

I'll never forget the first time a client Instagrammed her Yorkie's visit to my family's veterinary clinic. There it was: A new opportunity to have clients help us market ourselves.

I am completely obsessed with observing how people naturally utilize social media. Honestly, I attribute much of my success on social to this ability to identify and act on trends.

I want to pass that opportunity to be "on trend" onto you. It can be so scary to dive into a new platform, but the rewards are worth the risk.

As you go through our Instagram challenge, I know you're going to see the big benefits of Instagram verses Facebook.

Some big things I want you to recognize about Instagram?

1) There's more opportunity for people to discover you.

Unlike Facebook, Instagram really focuses on search and discovery. People have the ability to search hashtags or geotags in your local area, and they can stumble upon your posts by doing so.

2) There's more opportunity to connect.

Pet owner's Facebook profiles tend to be private, just for family and friends. That's not the case on Instagram, where many people have public profiles you can connect with. Heck, they might even have a public profile for their pet!



This ability to connect with people doesn't end at just being able to view more profiles and talk through comments and direct messages. You can also engage more using their Instagram Live feature, polls in your Instagram stories, and much more.

3. There's more opportunity to leverage ambassadors and influencers.

Many Instagram users are driven to build a following, unlike individual Facebook users. Why? Instagram is the home base for influencer marketing.

"Influencers" are people (or pets!) that build an engaged following by posting content that excites and inspires their ideal audience. Because they build relationships with their followers by being authentic, entertaining, and helpful, these influencers are able to sell

to their community. (Look no further than The Kardashians for proof of this). How cool is it to think that your team members, clients, and patients could all be influencers that help market you through their Instagram accounts?

4. There's more opportunity to share "less than perfect" content.

Instagram stories, different than Instagram posts, allow you to share more casual videos and photos. They only last 24 hours, so the pressure is off to make it perfect. It just needs to engage and entertain your audience!

5. There's more opportunity to convert real business.

People come to Instagram to shop, plain and simple. Leverage that consumer mindset by driving traffic to your website!



part 2

INSTA-UPGRADE CHECKLIST

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INSTA-UPGRADE CHECKLIST



Before you get to our post challenge, there are a few things to clarify. We'll rock through explanations in the coming pages, but here's a checklist to keep you on track!

- ☐ 1. *ESTABLISH A SECURE BUSINESS ACCOUNT*
- ☐ 2. *MAKE IT LOOK PROFESSIONAL*
- ☐ 3. *CREATE, FIND & SAVE HASHTAGS*
- ☐ 4. *CONNECT LOCALLY AND CONSISTENTLY*
- ☐ 5. *PROMO TO GROW*
- ☐ 6. *PLAN YOUR POSTS*
- ☐ 7. *TRACK INSIGHTS*

INSTA-UPGRADE CHECKLIST



1. Establish a secure business account

Every Instagram account you have should be secured with two-factor authentication, whether it's for your clinic or your personal use. Why? Simple: It protects your account from hacking.

To do this, visit your Instagram settings (look for the gear icon on the app!), scroll until you see "Two-factor authentication" in the menu. Click, switch on this security option, then follow Instagram's instructions.

Your Instagram profile becomes a true business account when you connect it to your veterinary clinic's Facebook business page. To clarify: This is NOT the same as linking your Facebook and Instagram to post the same content, which is not recommend.

Instead, you are going into your settings on either Facebook or Instagram and letting both platforms that your two clinic accounts are connected. Once you do this, you'll have business features, like your practice's address in your bio and Insights to track your Instagram success.

To connect your Instagram to your business page on Facebook, just go to your page settings on Facebook:

The screenshot shows the Facebook Page Settings interface. The left sidebar contains a list of settings categories: General, Page Info, Templates and Tabs, Post Attribution, Notifications, Messenger Platform, Page Roles, People and Other Pages, Preferred Page Audience, Authorizations, Branded Content, Instagram (highlighted with a red box), Featured, Crossposting, Page Support Inbox, and Wi-Fi Network. The main content area is titled 'Manage Instagram on Facebook' and includes an Instagram logo. Below this is the 'Instagram Account Details' section, which is also highlighted with a red box. It contains an 'Edit' button and a form with the following information:

Basic Information	
Name	Quinebaug Valley Vet Hospital
Username	qvrvets
Website	http://qvvh.com/using-bravecto-to-protect-your-dog-from-fleas-and-ticks/
Bio	Veterinary hospital in Danielson, Connecticut. Find out about Bravecto, the chewy treat flea & tick prevention that lasts 3 months! 🐕🐾
Category	Veterinarian
Business Contact Information	
Email	contact@qvvh.com
Phone Number	+18607747650
Address	616 Wauregan Rd

INSTA-UPGRADE CHECKLIST



2. Make your profile look professional

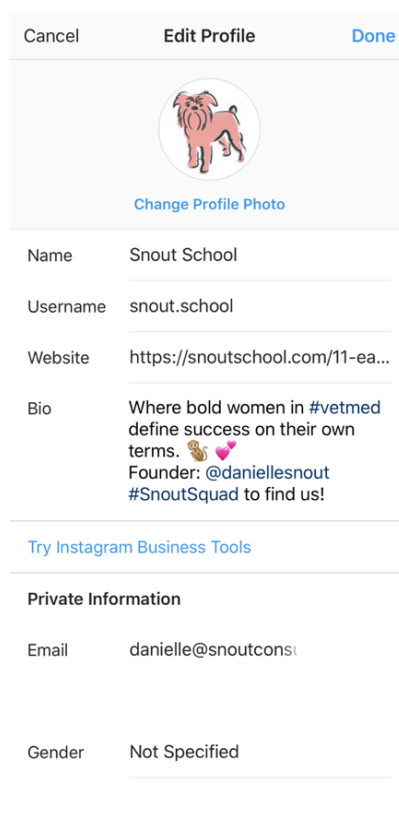
When it comes to a professional business profile on Instagram, there are a few steps to take. To make changes to your profile, simply click the "edit profile" button from your profile page. From there, you'll be able to edit a few things to ensure your profile is polished.

1. Make your logo your profile picture. Note: It will need to fit into a circular shape!

2. Create an effective bio description. Explain who you are and who you serve, then use local hashtags. Pro tip: If line breaks are giving you trouble, type this in the notes app on your phone first. From there, copy and paste into your bio on Instagram.

3. Utilize your bio link wisely. You only get 1 place to have a link on Instagram. (Your posts can't have links unless they're ads, and you need 10k+ followers to have links in your stories). Make the most of it to promote specific things, not just your homepage. Even better? Have your website provider build you a unique links page like WhiskerCloud made at [SnoutSchool.com/instagram](https://snoutschool.com/instagram). This way, you can promote multiple things at once/

(Demo with WhiskerCloud if you want a website with this feature by visiting WhiskerCloud.com/Danielle. Snout School followers get special deals, so make sure use that link!)



INSTA-UPGRADE CHECKLIST



3. Create, find, and use hashtags.

Hashtags are essentially how things get categorized on Instagram so that people can find things that interest them. A word, or words, plus the # symbol is how a hashtag is created. For example, #SnoutSquad is the tag for posts by Snout School followers.

Clinics often want to have their own hashtag. This can be a simple way for clients to tag you in a post, and for you to see posts shared by your clients. For example, Quinebaug Valley Veterinary Hospital might use something quick like #QVPets.

Here's the catch: You can't own a hashtag. Other people could hijack it and post whatever content they wish under it. Additionally, people need to know about that unique hashtag to begin with, so you have to promote it.

The best hashtags for a veterinary clinic to use are ones that are focused on local business. Sure, #dogsofinstagram has millions of posts. But do you need millions of pet owners following you from all over the world? Nope. That isn't your audience.

Instead, search to see what people in your area are using. If you are based in Boston, you could search #boston and see what other tags come up. You might find something like #BostonPets #BostonBusinesses #DogsOfBoston that would be relevant to your audience. (Psst - They don't have to be pet-related. The point is to show up in your local community!)

From there, you can add a few general hashtags, like #DogsOfInstagram. Why bother? It can help boost your engagement and the overall popularity of your post. Just like Facebook, your reach on Instagram is determined by people liking and commenting on your post. Popular hashtags can get you the likes you need to show up higher in your local hashtags!

Gather about 20-30 hashtags you want to use, then save them in your phone's notes app or in an app like Plann or Planoly. That way, you'll have them on hand to use on every post. You can use hashtags in your post captions, Instagram stories, or in the comments.

Here's an example of what a batch of hashtags might look like for a clinic based in Huntington Beach, California if they were posting a pic of a Labrador Retriever:

#HuntingtonBeach #HuntingtonBeachRealEstate #HuntingtonBeachPier
#HuntingtonBeachCa #HuntingtonBeachCommunity #OrangeCounty #SoCal #CostaMesa
#NewportBeach #DogsOfOrangeCounty #DogsOfCalifornia #DogsOfInstagram #VetMed
#Veterinarian #LabradorRetriever #LabsOfInstagram

INSTA-UPGRADE CHECKLIST



4. Connect locally and consistently

Want more followers? Get ready to work for 'em! Now that you know the popular hashtags in your local area, be sure to check them out and interact with people, pets, and businesses in your community.

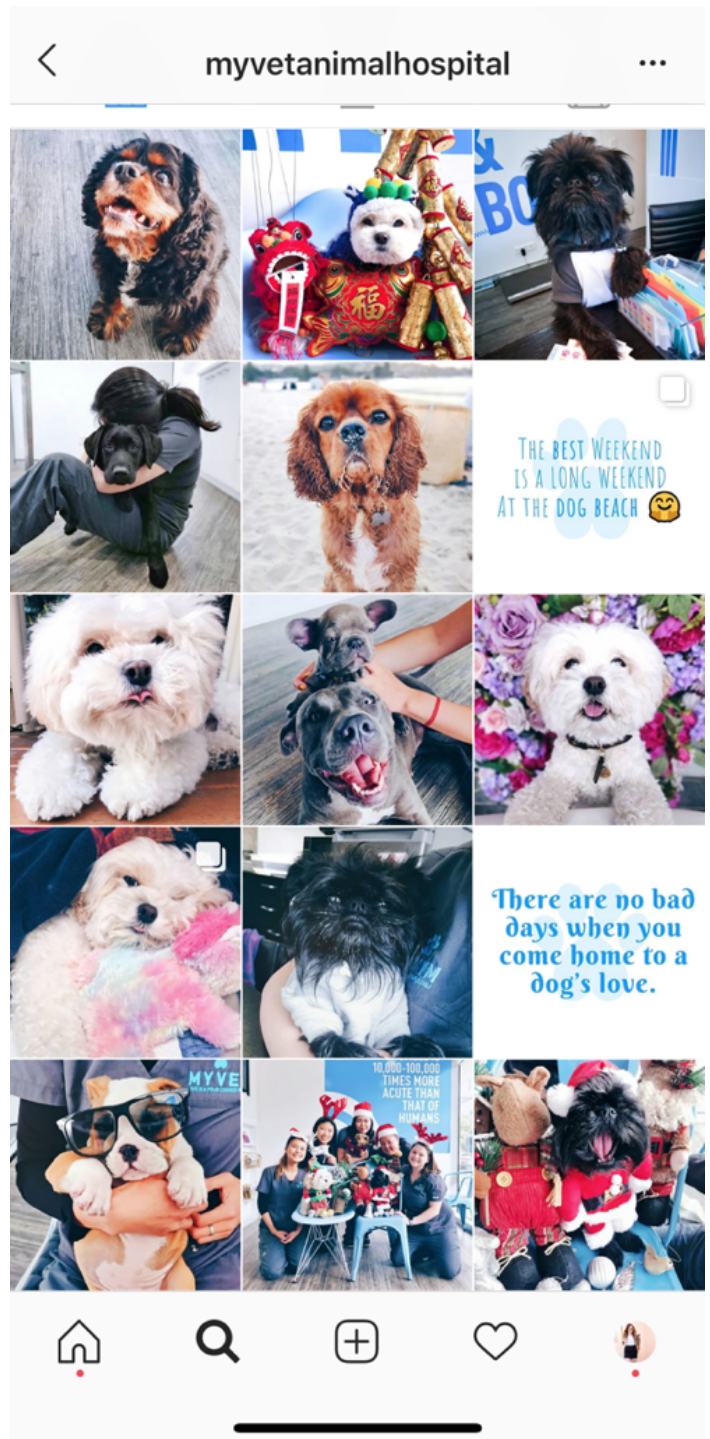
Commenting and liking local posts is an important strategy to help you build authentic community and grow your followers. It isn't easy, and it does take time. However, it's worth the effort.

In addition to interaction with your community, be on the look out for potential influencers in your area. You might be surprised to find a "local celebrity" pet with thousands of followers in your town, which opens up an exciting opportunity to utilize influencer marketing. Imagine them being your brand ambassador!

As always with social media, be sure to answer your comments and direct messages. Hitting "reply" on comments or typing "@" followed by the account handle you want to address ensures they see your response in the comments.

Your DMs, or direct messages, are private messages that live in the top right corner of your Instagram home screen.

These interactions are important for displaying quality customer service, but they also help you in the Instagram algorithm. What's that mean? Basically, talking to people helps more people see your posts!



INSTA-UPGRADE CHECKLIST



5. Promo to grow!

Apart from interacting with people, the best way to get followers on Instagram is to focus on a few key types of promotion.

1) Your pre-existing social platforms. Encourage your followers on any social media platforms you already have to also follow you on Instagram. Give an incentive, like a contest or "more cute patient pics" to make it seem enticing, then link to your Instagram account.
(Instagram.com/Username)

2. Email your clients! Let them know you're on Instagram, but also tell them how and why to follow you.

3. Connect with local businesses to co-promote each other's accounts. Local brewery allow dogs? Is there a groomer or kennel you refer to? Whoever it is, work together to build your accounts by doing a giveaway post that requires people to follow both profiles. (BONUS: The exact words to use in a giveaway/contest are included in the challenge tutorial section!)

4) Connect with local influencers to offer services or products in return for a promotional post asking people to follow your clinic.



INSTA-UPGRADE CHECKLIST



6. Plan your posts!

Consistent posting matters on Instagram. Use your Insights or the WhenToPost app to find the best time to post each day, then plan posts at least once a day. (Two would be the ideal goal if you're trying to build your account, but starting at 1 and staying consistent is more important as you start out!)

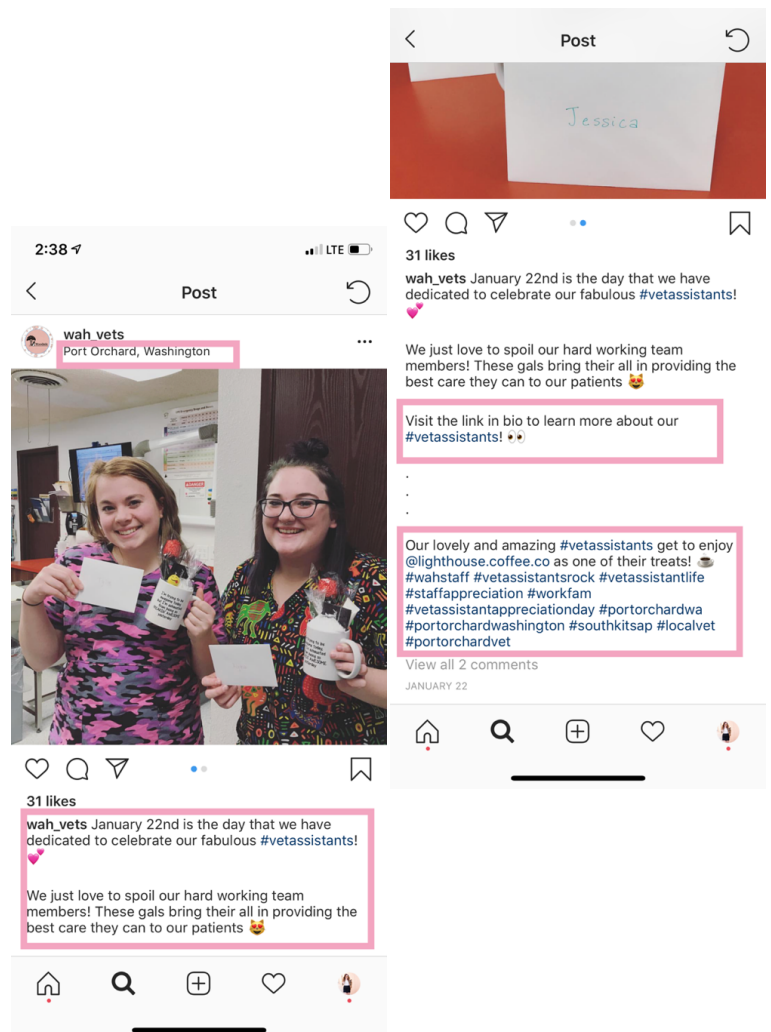
Planoly.com is a website and app that allows you to schedule posts - from your computer or from your smartphone - to autopost. This is an awesome option in a busy clinic environment.

Remember, an ideal IG post includes:

- 1) A great image or video
- 2) An engaging caption that grabs attention
- 3) A call-to-action in your caption, encouraging people to do something. (Comment, click the link in your bio, etc)
- 4) A geotag marking your location or another local location nearby so people can discover your profile
- 5) Relevant hashtags

Your stories can be a little less planned and on-the-fly, but be sure to jump on there with something each day to stay top of mind with your clients.

Utilize the "location" feature in stories, as well as hashtags, to get discovered.



INSTA-UPGRADE CHECKLIST



7. Track your Insights!

Just like on Facebook, you have analytics on Instagram called "Insights."

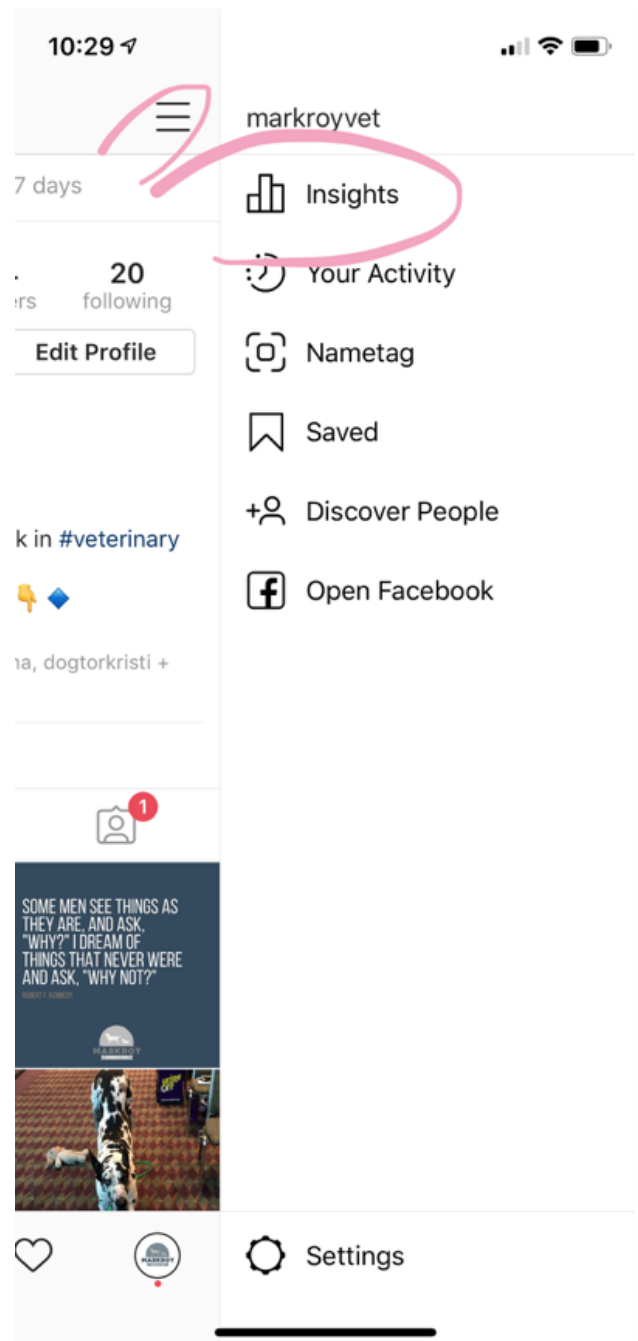
Remember: Not everyone who follows you sees your posts in the feed. You've got to fight the feed algorithm to ensure your stuff gets seen. How? By being consistent and engaging!

To see what content pet parents like, check out your Insights. This will show you what to post more of, and what you should maybe cut from your routine.

Increasingly more Instagram Insights are being shown on your Facebook business account, but you can also view them by clicking the menu icon from your Instagram account.

Overall, your aim should be to reach about 5-10% of your audience. Posts that aren't performing at that level might not be resonating, or might not be getting posted at a good time.

Experiment, see what works, and use your Insights to repeat your success!



part 3

4 WEEK
INSTAGRAM
CHALLENGE

#SnoutIGChallenge

CHALLENGE TIME!

#SnoutIGChallenge



Now that you know some of the basics of Instagram, it's time to practice. For the next 4 weeks, you'll test out different posts types and features, plus work to engage with your local community. **Use the hashtag #SnoutIGChallenge on all your posts so we can all connect!**

There will be different challenges each week, but there are two big things you need to guide your posts: A great SMART goal for the month and relevant calls-to-action to help drive traffic to your website. After all, all of your Instagram effort is only worth it if it develops such a powerful community that you are actually affecting your business!

Posting to feel popular seems cool, but posting in a way that increases compliance, boosts appointment bookings, and helps you reach other hospital goals is what makes all of your effort truly worth it.



1. ESTABLISH A SMART GOAL FOR THE MONTH

SMART goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely.

A regular goal says, "We want to increase compliance on heartworm prevention." A SMART goal says, "We want to increase compliance on heartworm prevention by 10% this month over last month."

Reaching your goals includes a holistic approach, but your Instagram can be part of the overall effort. Your SMART goal will help guide you on the types of posts you share and the calls to action that you use on them. (Eg: A heartworm compliance goal means heartworm-related posts, from stories about cases to Q&As about the disease).

Define your SMART goal for the month below:



2. BRAINSTORM POTENTIAL CALLS-TO-ACTION

A call-to-action asks someone to do something that will help you reach your goal. For example, "Click the link in our bio to refill your heartworm prescription!" or "Click the link in our bio to learn the truth about heartworm."

Define potential calls-to-action below:

WEEK ONE

#SnoutIGChallenge



- ☐ Use the WhenToPost app to find your best times to post.
- ☐ Make your hashtag list, and include it in all captions. (Use #SnoutIGChallenge!)
- ☐ Schedule a daily post for the week using the "perfect post" anatomy. (Use Planoly.com to schedule and autopost, if that's your preference!)
- ☐ Change your bio link, and include a call-to-action to it on all your posts.
- ☐ Tag your clinic location on each post.
- ☐ Find 5 clients/patients with public IG profiles. Follow and interact!
- ☐ Repost a client/patient's post with the Re-Post app.
- ☐ Make a post with a quote using Canva.com. (Be sure to use your logo and colors).

Plan this week's posts:

Sunday:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

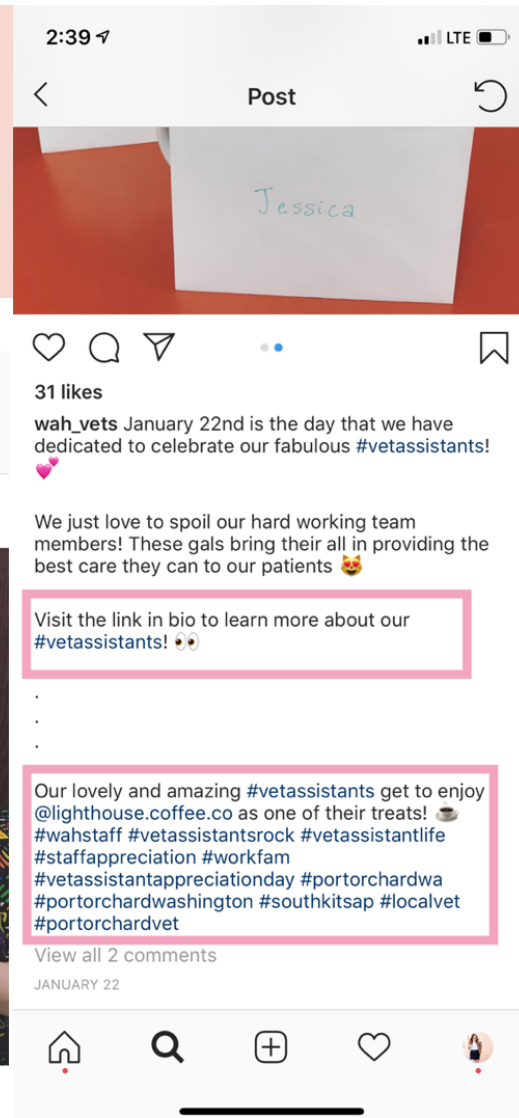
Saturday:

WEEK ONE: Tutorials

#SnoutIGChallenge



The Anatomy of a Perfect Post



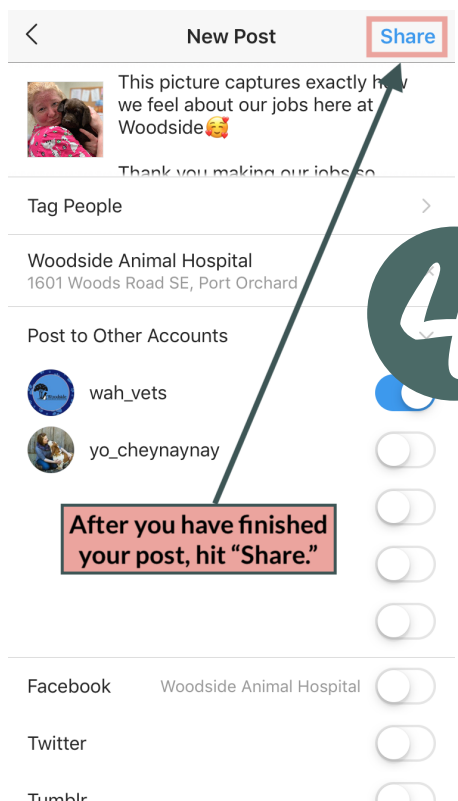
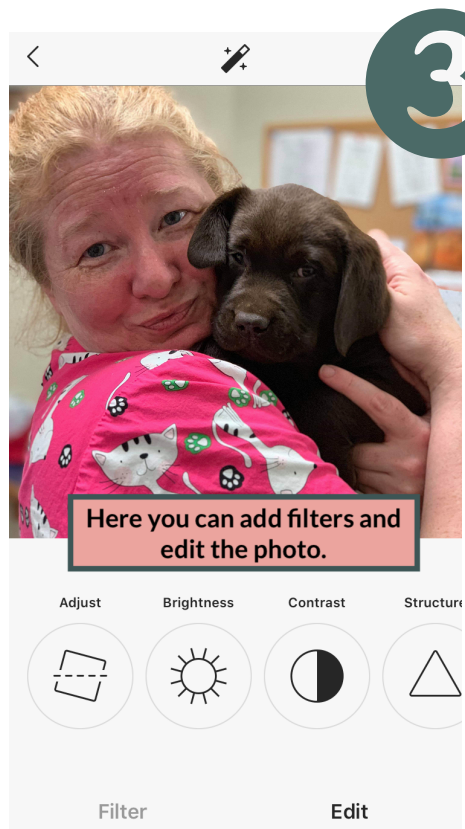
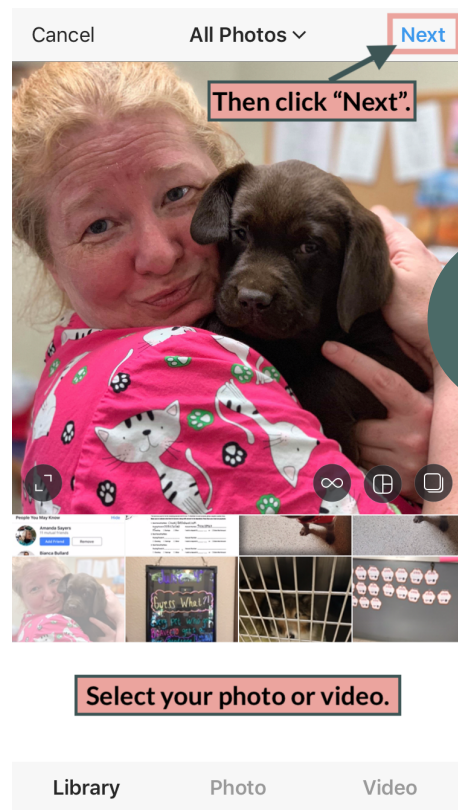
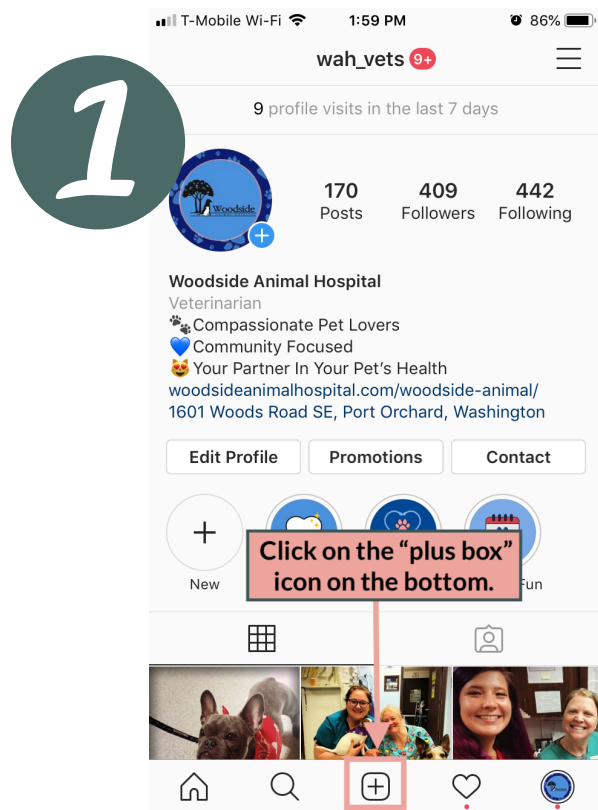
- 1) High-quality photo or video
- 2) Consistent filter/edits or branding
- 3) Caption that captures attention and is space so it's easy to scan
- 4) Some sort of call-to-action
- 5) Hashtags IN CAPTION
- 6) Tags for any relevant accounts
- 7) Geotag
- 8) Posted at a good time!

WEEK ONE: Tutorials

#SnoutIGChallenge



How to create & share an Instagram post:

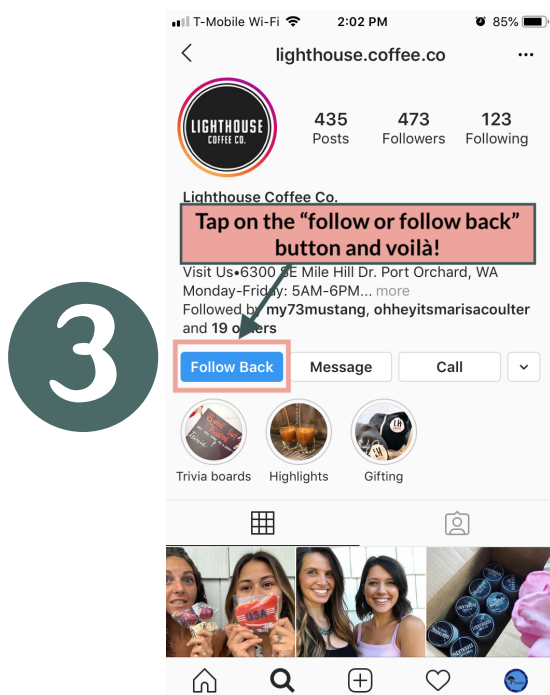
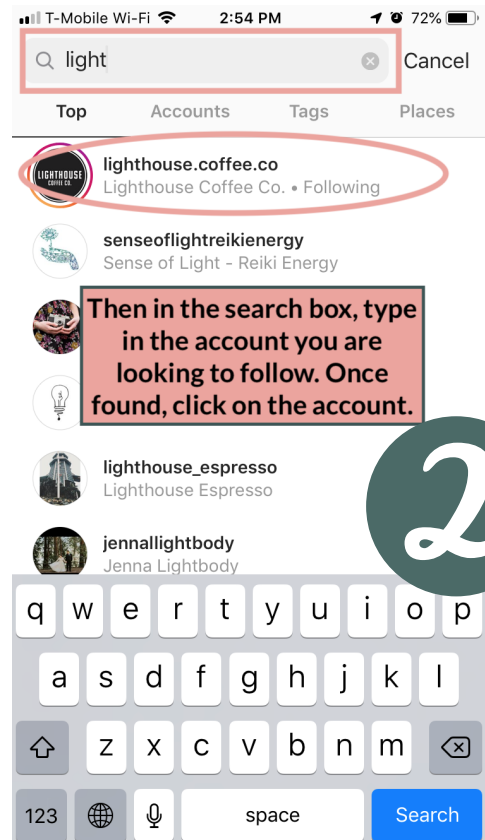
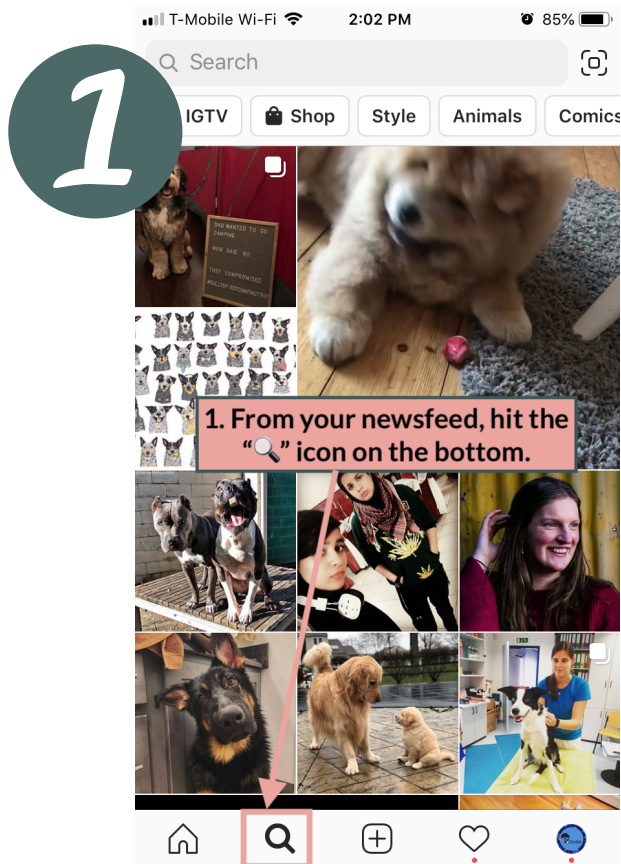


WEEK ONE: Tutorials

#SnoutIGChallenge



How to follow other accounts:



PRO TIP:

You don't need to follow everyone who follows you. Look to follow clients, patients, and other local businesses that have PUBLIC profiles. Follow accounts that are open to interacting with you!

WEEK TWO

#SnoutIGChallenge



- ☐ Schedule a daily post for the week using the "perfect post" anatomy.
- ☐ Post to story 3 times this week.
- ☐ Tag your hospital's location in a story.
- ☐ Post a story about a patient.
- ☐ Post a story about a team member with a "True or False" poll sticker.
- ☐ Use IG stickers creatively on a story.
- ☐ Find local hashtags and follow them.
- ☐ Follow and interact with 5 local businesses.

Plan this week's posts:

Sunday:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

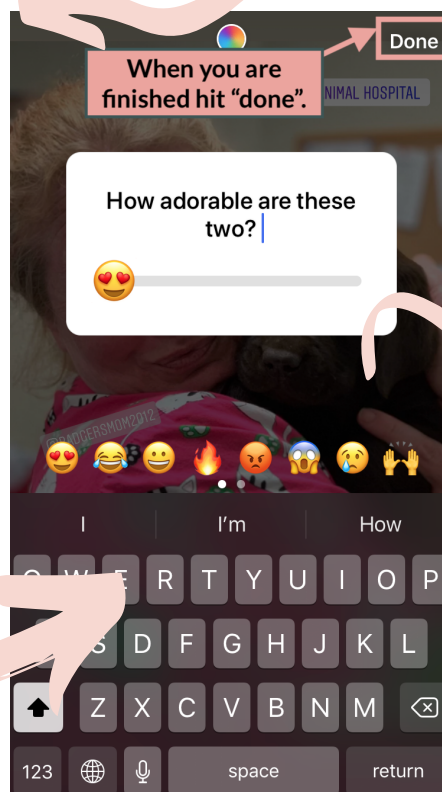
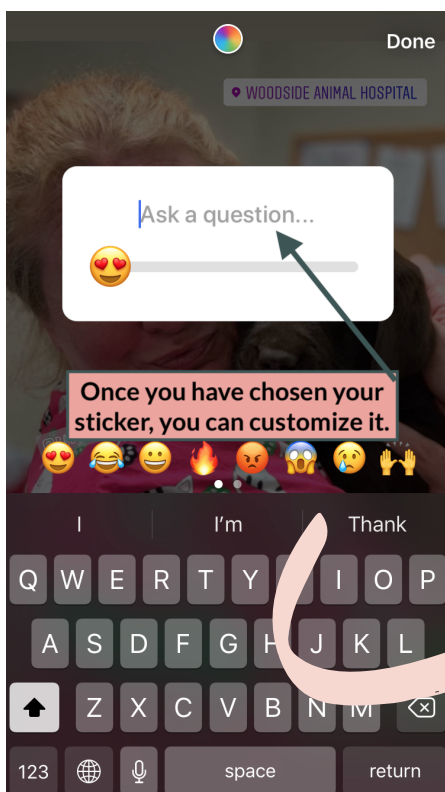
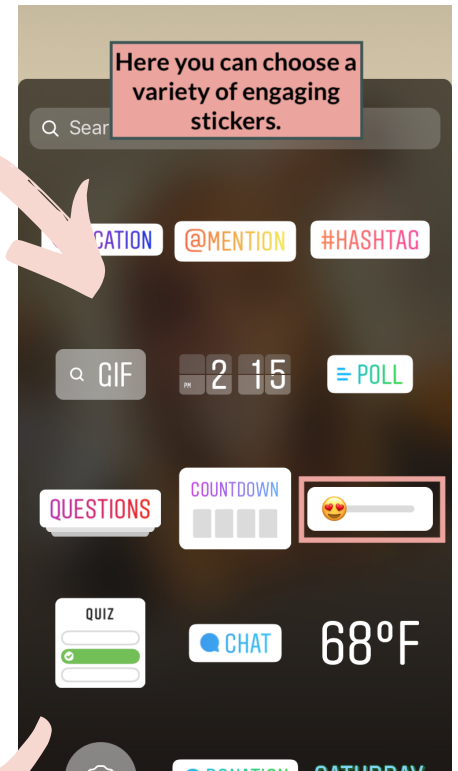
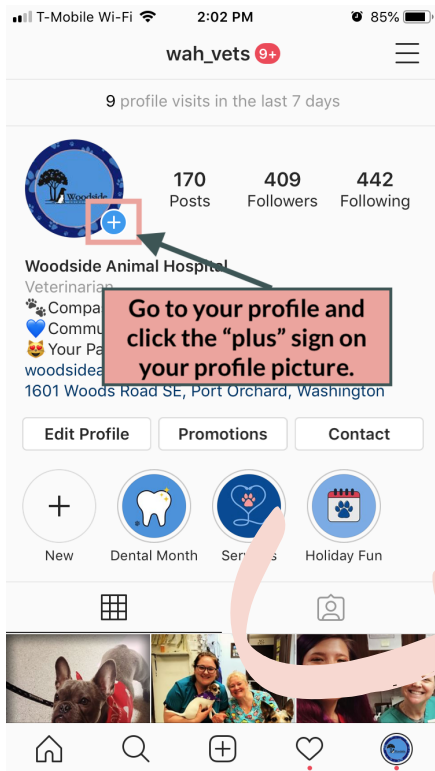
Saturday:

WEEK TWO: Tutorials

#SnoutIGChallenge



How to post an Instagram story:

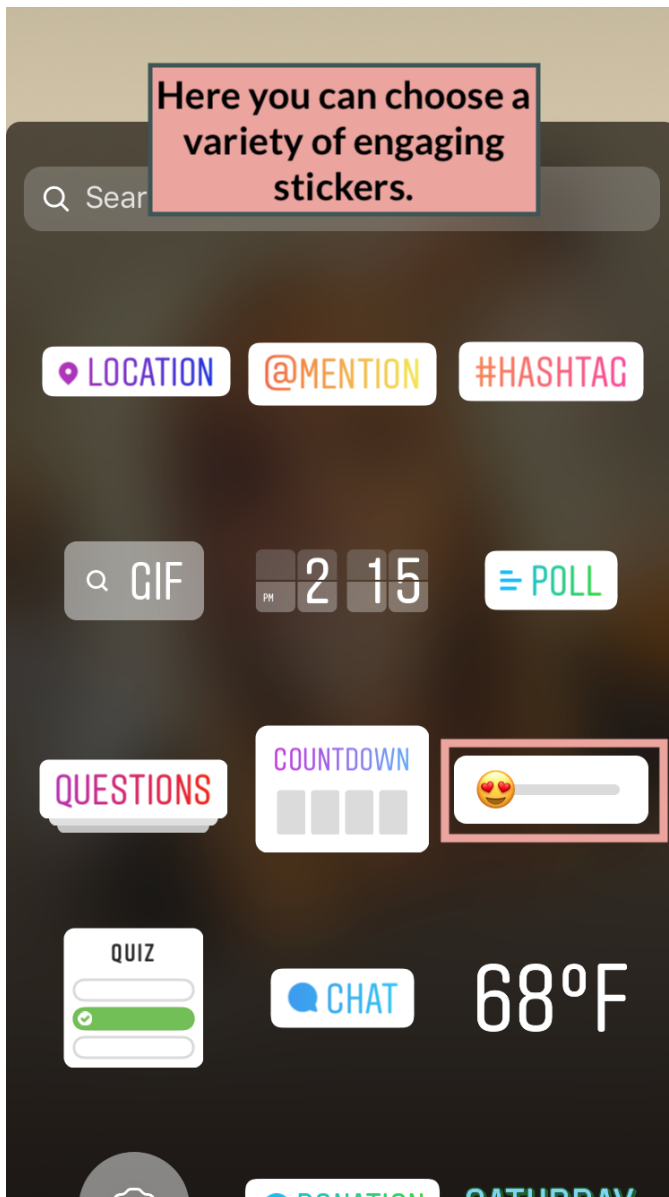


WEEK TWO: Tutorials

#SnoutIGChallenge



Know your Instagram story stickers:



Location: Allows you to tag your clinic as a location or, even better, tag your town so other people can find you in the town's story!

@Mention: Tag another account

#Hashtag: Use local hashtags to help discover

GIFS: Add fun images

Poll: Add interactive polls, like True or False

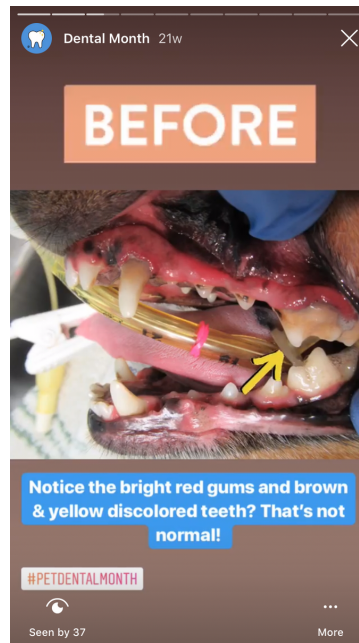
Questions: Ask a question for people to respond to

WEEK TWO: Tutorials

#SnoutIGChallenge



Check out this story for inspiration!



Pro tip:

Remember stories only last 24 hours! Use them as a way to be transparent about that day's cases, but also to consistently educate in a format that is engaging!

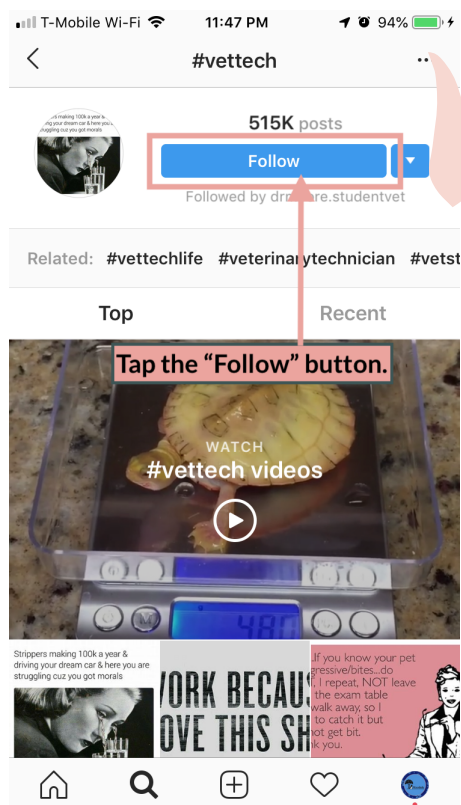
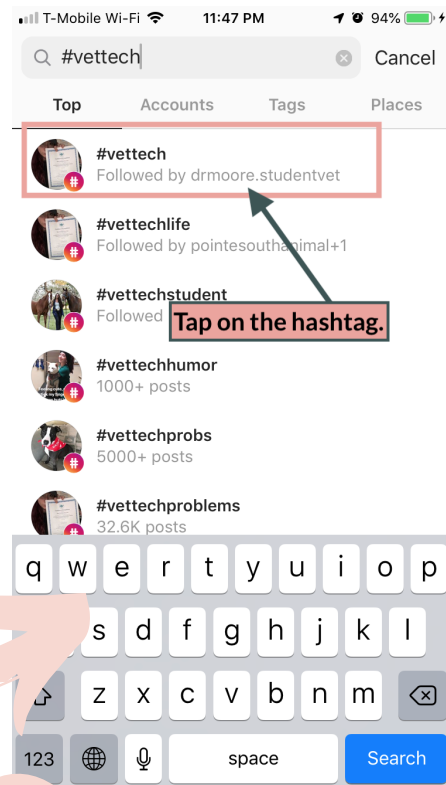
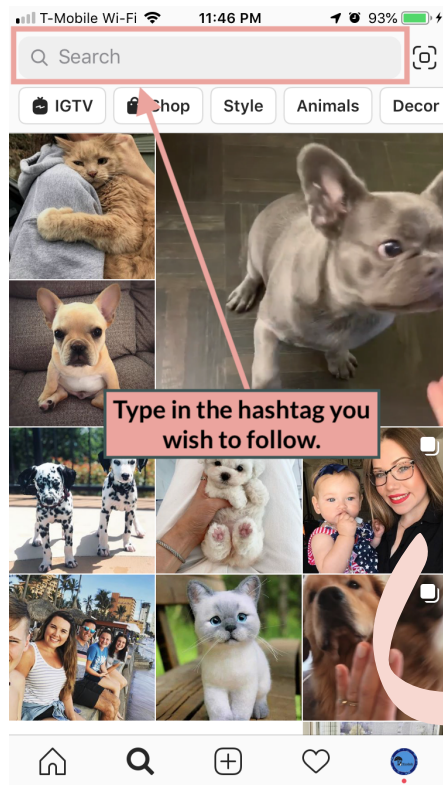
Think of it like a slideshow, and have fun.

WEEK TWO: Tutorials

#SnoutIGChallenge



How to follow a hashtag:



FYI
When you follow a hashtag, it shows up in your feed with posts from accounts you follow. It's a fun way to discover new posts. Focus on following local hashtags to find new local connections.

WEEK THREE

#SnoutIGChallenge



- ☐ Schedule a daily post for the week using the "perfect post" anatomy.
- ☐ Post to story daily this week.
- ☐ Post a story about a service.
- ☐ Post a story about something educational.
- ☐ Put a blog post in your bio link, and then promote it in your story!
- ☐ Partner up with local business to plan a giveaway for next week. Send them a DM to open up the conversation!

Plan this week's posts:

Sunday:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

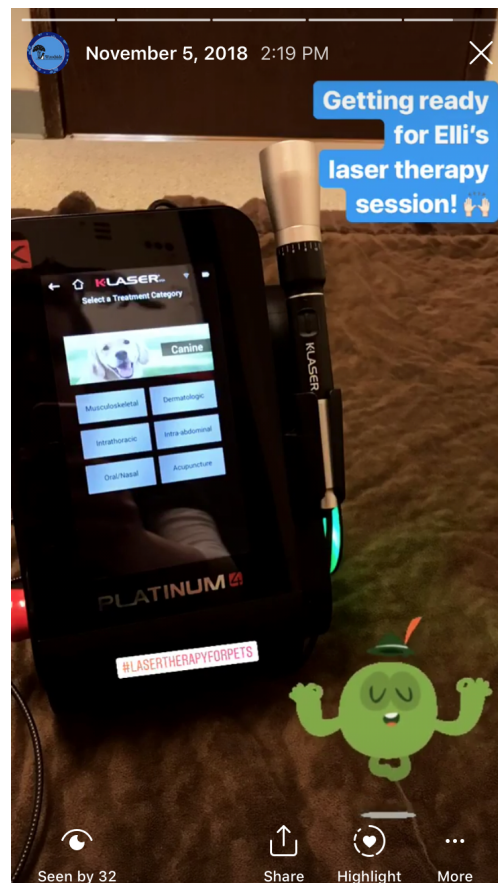
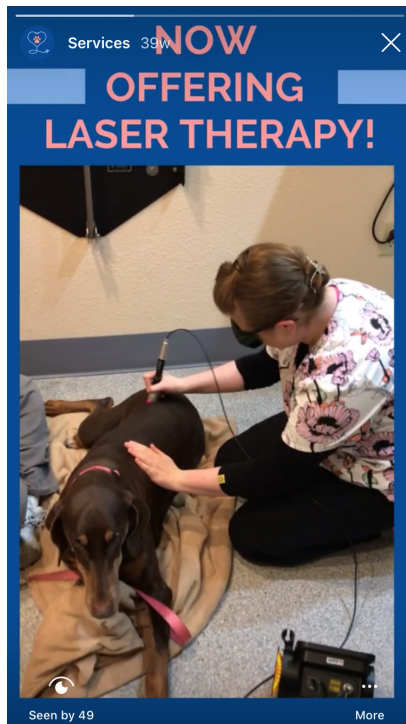
Saturday:

WEEK THREE: Tutorials

#SnoutIGChallenge



Check out this example of a story about a service!



WEEK FOUR

#SnoutIGChallenge



- ☐ Schedule a daily post for the week using the "perfect post" anatomy.
- ☐ Post to story daily this week.
- ☐ Do a giveaway post with another local business.
- ☐ Share your giveaway post to your story to promote it.
- ☐ Promote an IG live in your story.
- ☐ Do an IG live.
- ☐ Review your Insights for the month to see what worked and prep for next month!

Plan this week's posts:

Sunday:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

Saturday:

WEEK FOUR: Tutorials

#SnoutIGChallenge



How to caption your giveaway:

Giveaways with other accounts are a great way to build your account. You'll need a great image, plus a great caption. Here's a sample caption to use. (Remember: Always ask your attorney for further advice on running social media contests!)

Want to win (prize)? Here's how:

- 1) Follow our account, @(your username)
- 2) Follow @(username of account you've partnered with)
- 3) Tag a local pet lover that would love to win too!

We'll choose a winner at random on (PUT DATE & TIME HERE, RECOMMENDED 24-48 HOURS FROM TIME YOU POST!)

Restrictions apply. Must be in US (or your country) to win. We'll DM you for your address after the winner is chosen. This contest is not sponsored by nor affiliated with Instagram.

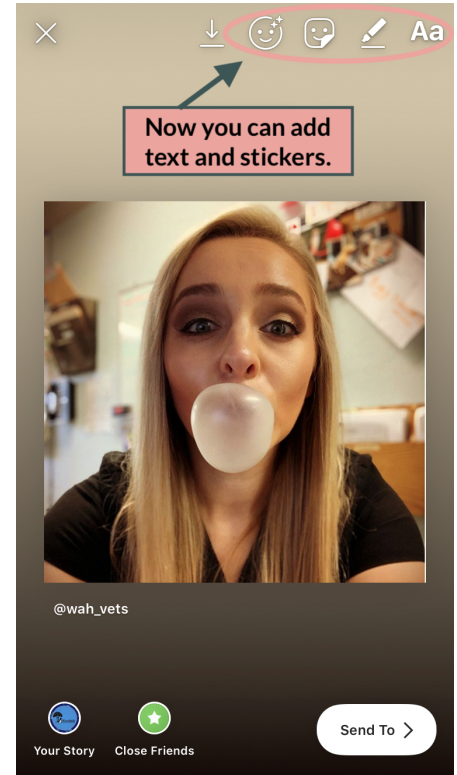
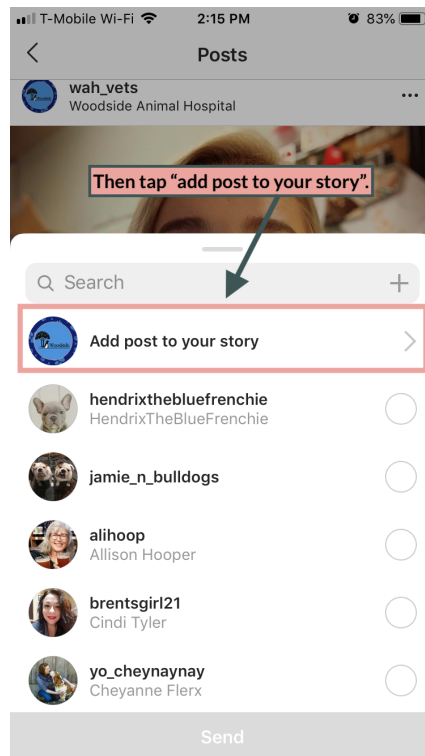
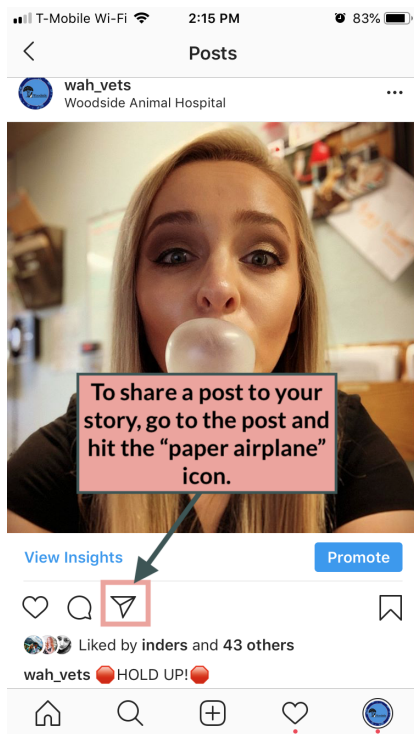


WEEK FOUR: Tutorials

#SnoutIGChallenge



How to share a post to your story:



Pro tip:

Utilize this feature whenever you want to call special attention to a post on your account or on someone else's account.

All posts don't make it into the Instagram feed, so this is a great way to help more people see 'em.

Keep going.

#SnoutIGChallenge is something you can repeat every month, just with different SMART goals.

Instagram appreciates consistency, so keep rockin' it!

Be sure to follow me on Instagram (@DanielleSnout) and Snout School (@Snout.School) to stay in touch and stay motivated.

A big THANK YOU to Cheyanne Flerx for her contributions to this guide. If you spot her in our Facebook group ([Facebook.com/groups/snoutschool](https://www.facebook.com/groups/snoutschool)), be sure to let her know how much you appreciate her hard work!

xo

Danielle

