**2020 INSTAGRAM
INDUSTRY REPORT**

When to Post Your Content For Maximum Engagement

**TRAVEL | BRICK & MORTAR | CHILDRENS
EDUCATION | ENTERTAINMENT | FOOD & BEVERAGE
HEALTH & BEAUTY | MARKETING | TECHNOLOGY
RECREATION | PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
PHOTOGRAPHER | PERSONAL BRAND
NON-PROFIT | MEDIA | CLOTHING & APPAREL
CREATIVE SERVICES | BLOGGER**

tailwind

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Executive Summary

One billion people worldwide use Instagram on a monthly basis[1], and 107.2 million of them are in the U.S.[2] If you're like me, these stats don't come as a surprise, but they do underscore the marketing opportunity represented by Instagram.

The opportunity for reaching and engaging with customers has attracted 73 percent of marketers to Instagram's uniquely compelling visual-first platform, according to Social Media Examiner's 2019 Social Media Industry Report.[3]

As an Instagram partner and leader in the visual marketing space, Tailwind is committed to helping marketers stand out from the crowd. This report is designed to help you find the best times to post on Instagram, based on engagement trends across Instagram and in your industry.

We developed the data by segmenting Tailwind users into categories and analyzing their previous three months post history. The study looks exclusively at posts in the Instagram Feed (not Stories). And, it includes both organic and sponsored content. Please see the methodology section below for a more detailed look at our process.

In publishing this report, the team at Tailwind and I hope it will:

- Give you confidence as you plan your Instagram posts

- Help you to achieve your goals as an Instagram marketer

- Inspire you to grow your audience on Instagram

Greg Starling
Head of Innovation Lab at Tailwind

For 20 years, Greg has been designing products and managing processes; writing and speaking about entrepreneurship, employee engagement, technology trends, and management. His previous roles include eCommerce director at Hobby Lobby, Vice President of Technology at MTM Recognition, CTO at WeGoLook, and CTO at Monscierge.

Greg has had his projects featured in *Forbes*, *Wired*, *Inc*, *Mashable*, *Entrepreneur* and various other publications. He has won multiple awards for leadership in addition to being named Innovator of the Year twice by the *Journal Record*.

[1] Techcrunch.com. 2020. Techcrunch Is Now A Part Of Verizon Media. [online] Available at: **techcrunch.com/2018/06/20/instagram-1-billion-users** [Accessed 1 March 2020].

[2] eMarketer. 2020. Emarketer Podcast: 2020 Digital Media Predictions, Instagram User Growth Slows And What Shoppers Want From Store Associates. [online] Available at: **emarketer.com/content/podcast-the-digital-world-in-2020?ecid=NL1001** [Accessed 25 February 2020].

[3] Stelzner, M., 2020. 2019 Social Media Marketing Industry Report. [online] Social Media Marketing | Social Media Examiner. Available at: **socialmediaexaminer.com/social-media-marketing-industry-report-2019** [Accessed 21 February 2020].

How to Use This Report

This report offers two types of data-driven insights:

- The best times to post based on 1.8 million posts.
- The best times to post drawn from accounts in similar interest categories.

We recommend starting with the Best Times to Post on Instagram section, then jumping to your particular category.

What Makes This Report Different?

The data for this study has two components:

- A solid base of posts drawn from Instagram beginning in 2013 and continuing until 2020.
- A set of 63,253 Instagram posts that came online during the last three months.

What makes this report different?
The most valuable social media data combines a large volume of historical data to provide context **and** fresh content that reflects Instagram's continually changing algorithm.

This study also analyzes posts from accounts with a wide range of followers.

What Are the Best Times to Post on Instagram?

Where's the Most (and Least) Competition for Attention?

In the data set used for this report[4], the Blogging and Clothing/Apparel categories have the most posts. Based on this study, gaining the attention of this audience may be more difficult than it is in other categories because there is more competition for attention in these categories.

To gain followers in highly competitive landscapes, hashtags are critical because they allow you to reach people who follow a hashtag, even if they don't already follow you.

Use multiple hashtags for the best results.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
>
> Don't approach hashtag generation carelessly. To be effective, you'll need a solid plan to research the best hashtags for your audience.
>
> If you are using Tailwind, you automatically have access to our AI-powered hashtag generator.
>
> Hashtag Finder is also available in our free trial.
>
> **Start a Free Trial**
>
> Get started Free. No credit card required.

Which day is best for getting likes?

The posts in our sample got an average of 160-184 likes per day. The highest average volume of likes for all categories was on **Saturday**.

Test Saturday posts with your audience for six weeks and observe the response.

Average Instagram Likes by Day for All Posts — tailwind
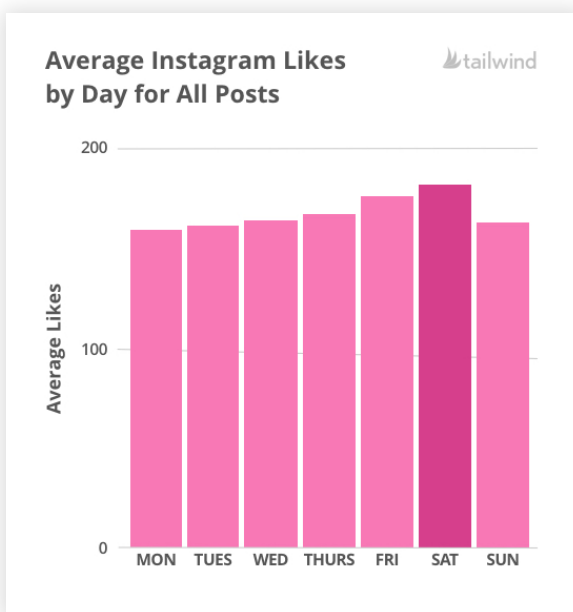
Don't want to spend time on Instagram on the weekend? Try Tailwind for Instagram with 30 free posts.

We are an official Instagram Partner, which means you can take a break for the weekend, and still get the results you want!

[4] The data here is representational and for informational purposes only. Account categories are reflective of Tailwind's customer base, and are not 100 percent equivalent to accounts on Instagram.

Which day is best for comments?

Wednesday, but not by much.

The daily average number for comments per post in this study didn't vary widely, ranging from a minimum of 7.9 to a max of 9.6.

In different audience segments, however, the data does reflect more volatility in comments based on the day of the week.

When thinking about comments, don't forget the importance of the content you share: Use great images, be personal, ask questions.
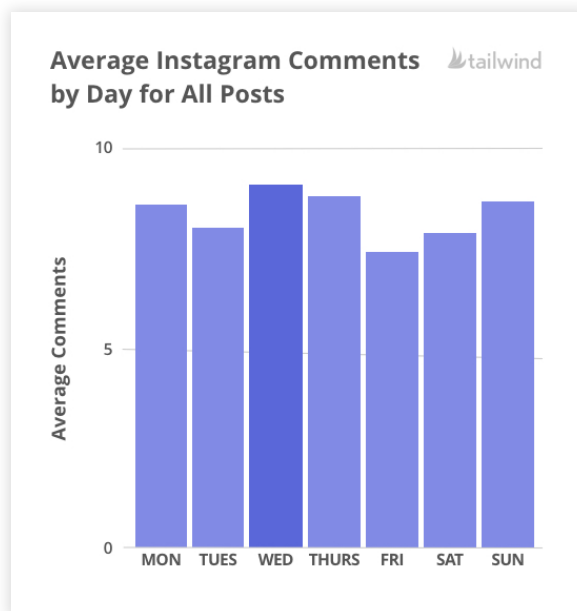
What time is best for likes?

The chart below looks at three months of Instagram posts. The bar size indicates how many times users have posted during particular time slots. The blue bars indicate engagement of higher than three percent, olive indicates less than three percent.
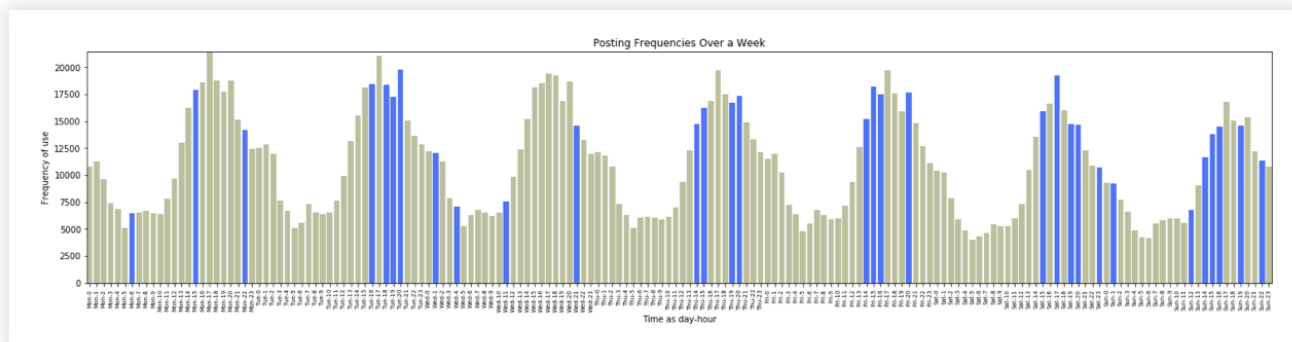
There's a clear pattern. In terms of U.S. time zones, people post most frequently in the late morning or early afternoon. And these posts tend to be the ones that do better!

In addition, it's clear that engagement occurs more frequently towards the end of the week.

What About Followers?

It's easy to think that more followers will automatically increase engagement, but our data showed a different pattern.

The group with the highest engagement had less than 500 followers. And, engagement decreased with every gain in followers.
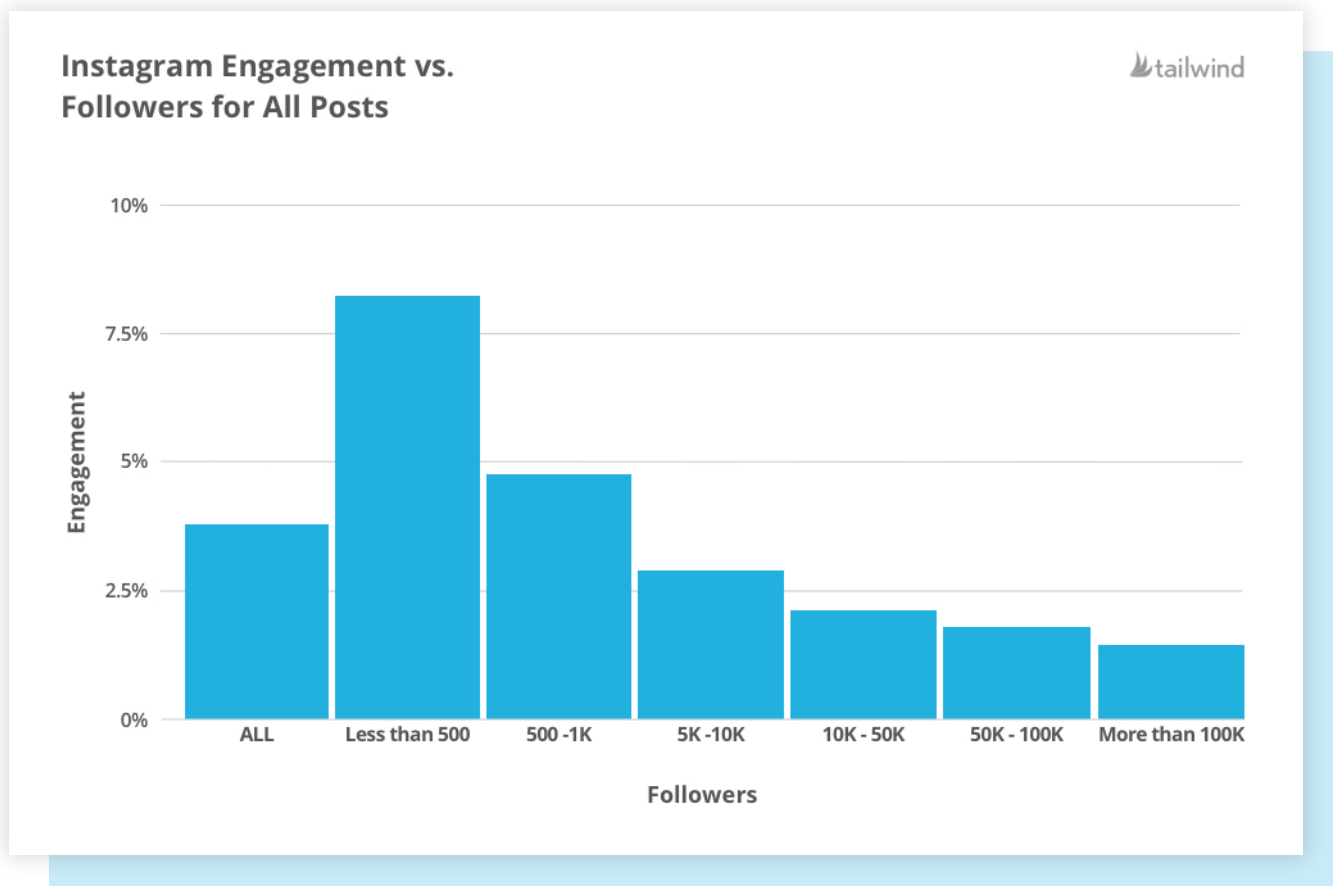
The larger the audience, the less likely that you can consistently engage them with every post.

Weighing the benefits of a large audience and contrasting those with the benefits of more engagement is a strategic decision for business owners.

For example, if you have a local business, working to increase engagement with customers will likely be more valuable than spending time on developing a national or international audience.

Action Steps

For Your Own Account

1. Which category best describes the audience you want to reach?

(travel, brick and mortar, childrens, education, entertainment, food and beverage, health and beauty, marketing, technology, recreation, professional services, photographer, personal brand, non-profit, media, clothing and apparel, creative services)

_____

2. What are your current followers, likes, & comments?

Followers:_____ Likes:_____ Comments: _____

Want to figure out average comments per post?

In Instagram Insights, you can sort your posts by time frame and interaction to show you the number of comments each of your posts have gotten. Total those comments and divide by your number of posts to get your average comment rate.

Tailwind's Insights will save you a step. Tailwind provides the total number of posts from your account and the number of comments those posts have gotten. Use those numbers to find the average comments/post for your profile.

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3. Choose your focus: Followers or Engagement.

Followers   Engagement

4. Set a realistic growth goal:

- If you are in the lowest 25% for your category, work toward getting to the median level.
- Consider the size of your overall audience, and the niche you serve.
- **PRO TIP:** Don't forget to think about whether your topic lends itself to Instagram's public/visual nature.
- Compare your posting schedule with this report for Instagram overall and for your category, and set a posting schedule that aligns with these times.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Manage Instagram for Others?

The benchmarking data in this report can help you build a strong case for your services.

Let your clients see how they currently compare to their category and estimate the increases they can expect to see based on what's realistic for the category.

For example, if you focus your benchmarking for client pitches and reports on broad industry data, you may overestimate the potential for growth in some categories, making it harder to get or retain customers.

In our data, the average number of followers for all of the Instagram accounts included was 13,666. But, in some categories the average followers is much lower.

Knowing industry averages will help you develop better pitches and retain more clients.

Are you an influencer? Do you want to be?

The benchmarking data in this report can help you showcase your position in the industry. Check the number of followers in the top 25 percent for your topic category. Then, add this study to your media kit.

What Do the Categories Mean?

The categories below were drawn from the Facebook API, where Instagram logs the categories chosen by Business and Creator account holders when they sign up. We supplemented this with Tailwind's customer data.

How Do the Categories Compare?
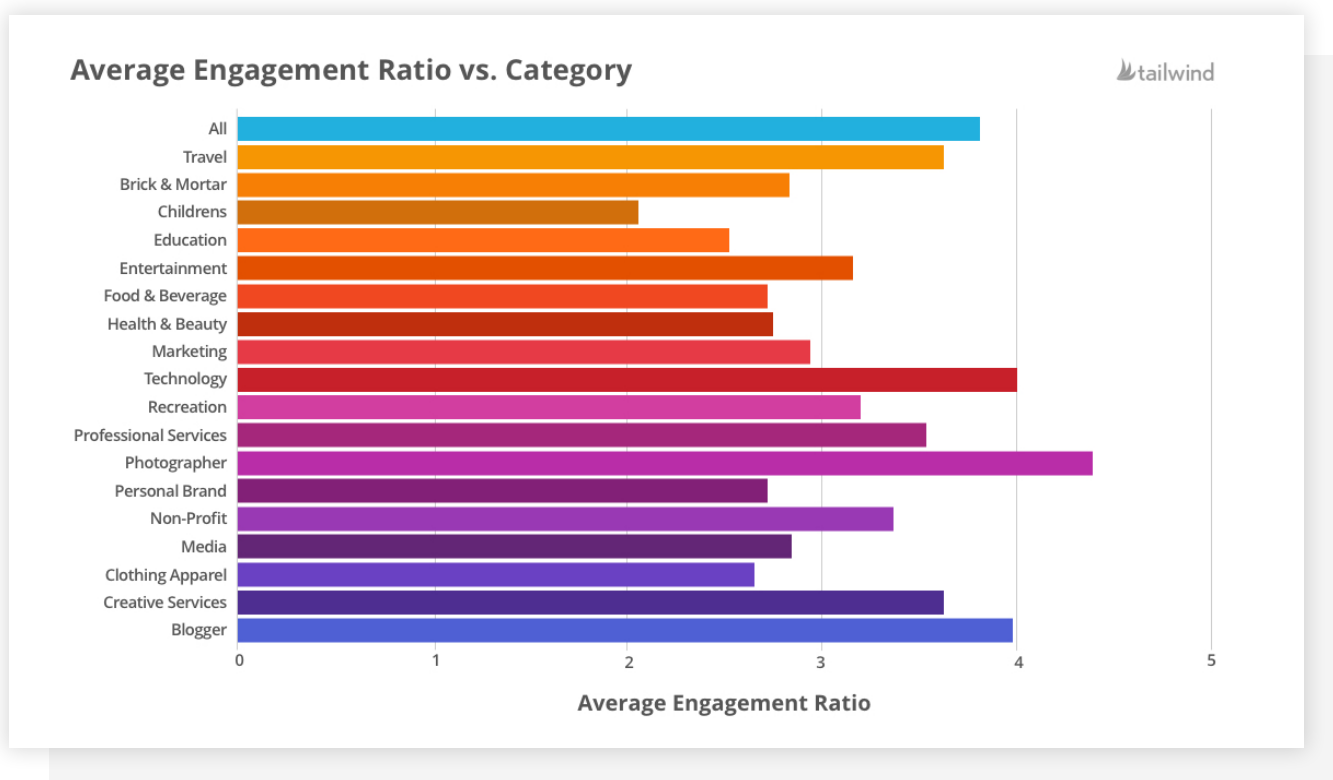
The larger the audience, the less likely that you can consistently engage them with every post.

Weighing the benefits of a large audience and contrasting those with the benefits of more engagement is a strategic decision for business owners.

For example, if you have a local business, working to increase engagement with customers will likely be more valuable than spending time on developing a national or international audience.

The variation across categories is significant for comments, with an average range of 4 to 18.87 per post. The media category has the most average comments, most likely reflective of a news focus.

Similarly, media posts also get the most average likes, followed by Entertainment.

Travel

About the category:

- 30,367 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 10,267 or more
- **For comments:** 4 or more
- **For likes:** 121 or more

If you have a post with 4 or more comments, 121 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 2,365 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 42 or more likes

| MO | TU | WE | TH | FR | SA | SU | |

FOR COMMENTS

7 AM
best time (EST)

SATURDAY
best day

FOR LIKES

6 AM
best time (EST)

SUNDAY
best day

Since both comments and likes spike sharply at 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. EST consider adding posts to Instagram at those times.

Using a scheduler like Tailwind makes it easy to do this without compromising your sleep!

Brick and Mortar

About the category:

- 48,117 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 5,182 or more
- **For comments:** 3 or more
- **For likes:** 72 or more

If you have a post with 3 or more comments, or 72 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 2,067 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 29 or more likes.

| MO | TU | WE | TH | FR | SA | SU |

FOR COMMENTS
4 PM
best time (EST)
FRIDAY
best day

FOR LIKES
1 AM
best time (EST)
SUNDAY
best day
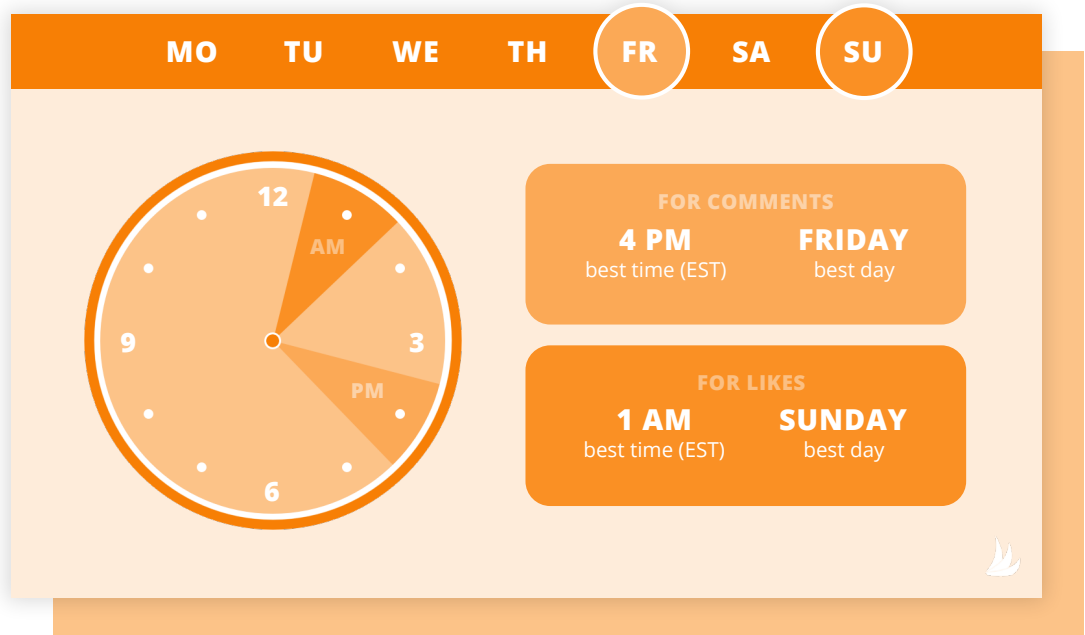
In this category, comments and likes peak at different times. There are more comments at 4 p.m. EST and more likes at 1 a.m. EST.

POSTING TIP

Create a connection with your followers by using Stories to share moments from your day as they happen.

Childrens

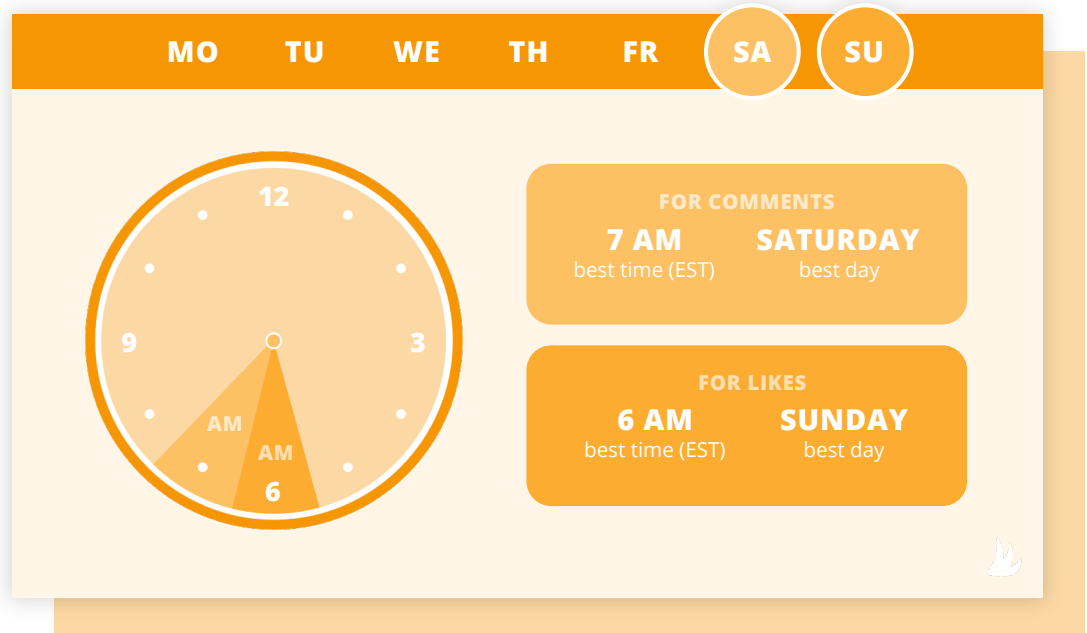**About the category:**

- 13,278 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 12,933 or more
- **For comments:** 5 or more
- **For likes:** 73 or more

If you have a post with 5 or more comments, or 73 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 3,599 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 25 or more likes.

| MO | TU | WE | TH | FR | SA | SU |

FOR COMMENTS

9 PM best time (EST) **MON & WED** best day

FOR LIKES

9 PM best time (EST) **TUESDAY** best day

The data shows a steep decline in **comments** on the weekend. This makes sense as many parents spend this time focusing on family or their childrens' events.

Plan for this trend by posting content that your audience can consume with less effort on weekends and save content that elicits a deeper response for weekdays.

Average Instagram Comments by Day for Childrens

tailwind

Education

About the category:

- 31,375 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 7,432 or more
- **For comments:** 4 or more
- **For likes:** 62 or more

If you have a post with 4 or more comments, or 62 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 2,008 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 23 or more likes.

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU

FOR COMMENTS

7 PM
best time (EST)

SAT & SUN
best day

FOR LIKES

7 PM
best time (EST)

SAT & SUN
best day

POSTING TIP

Balance the visuals of your feed by using different angles and post types to avoid getting repetitive.

Entertainment

About the category:

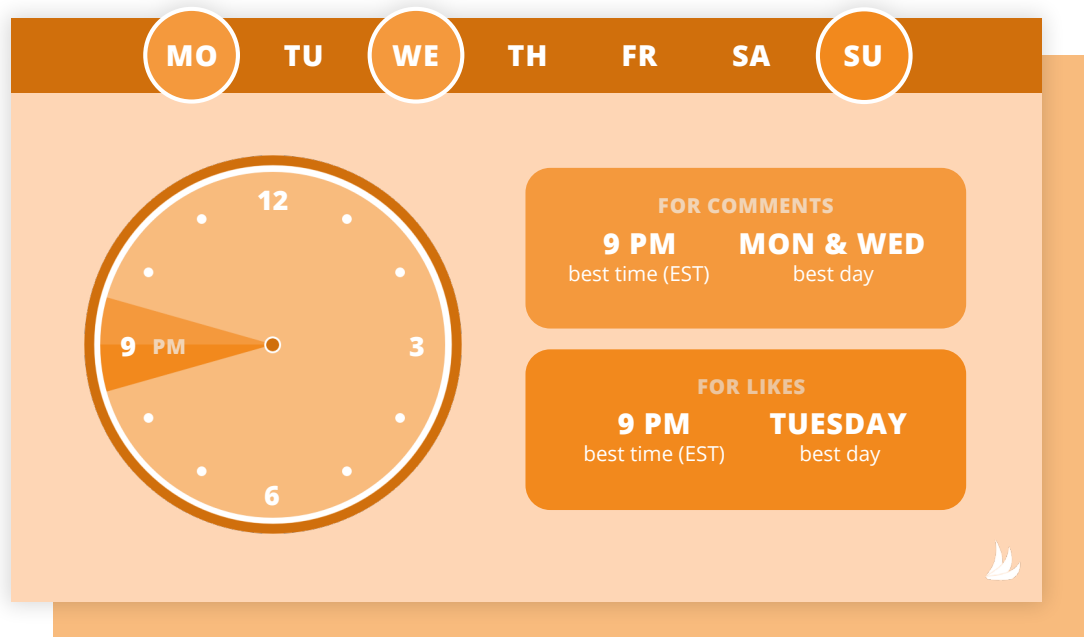- 15,842 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 19,250 or more
- **For comments:** 6 or more
- **For likes:** 196 or more

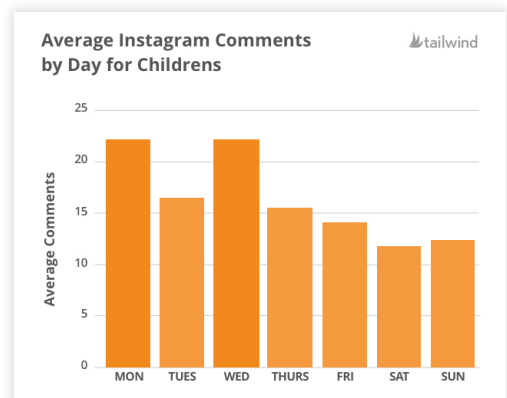If you have a post with 6 or more comments, or 196 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 3,185 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 45 or more likes.

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU

FOR COMMENTS

4 PM best time (EST)   **THURSDAY** best day

FOR LIKES

11 PM best time (EST)   **SAT & SUN** best day

The average number of comments, likes, and followers for posts in this category are higher than the averages for all of the other posts in our sample.

Comments peak at 4 p.m. EST. Plan to have comment-encouraging posts online before PrimeTime TV starts in the U.S.

Likes by hour have a very different pattern, peaking at 11 p.m. EST. Leverage this with memes or other easy to enjoy content posted later in the day.

Food and Beverage

About the category:
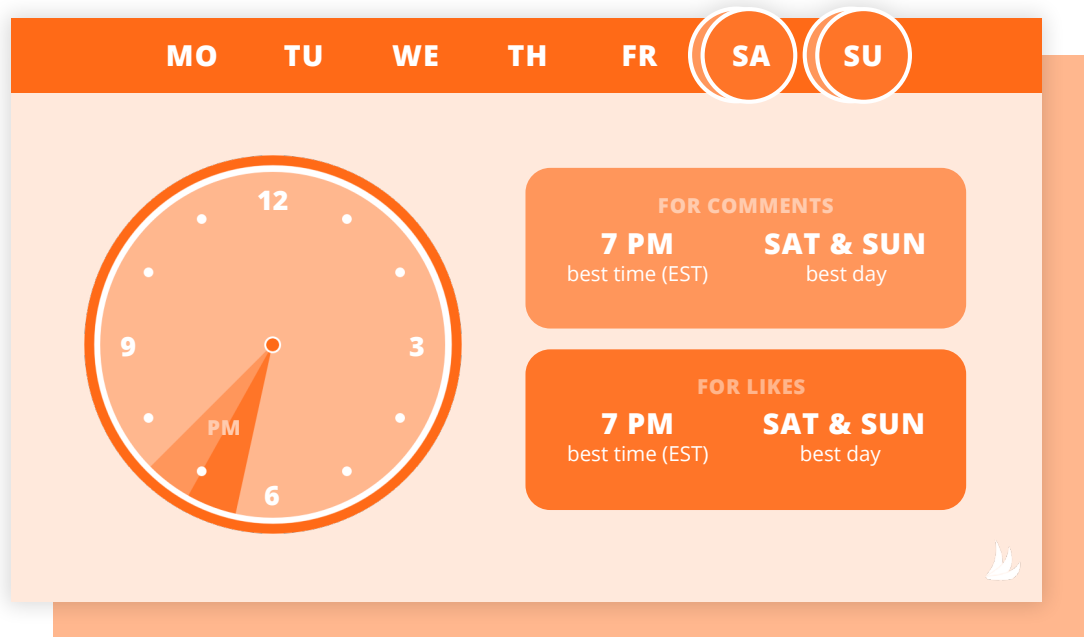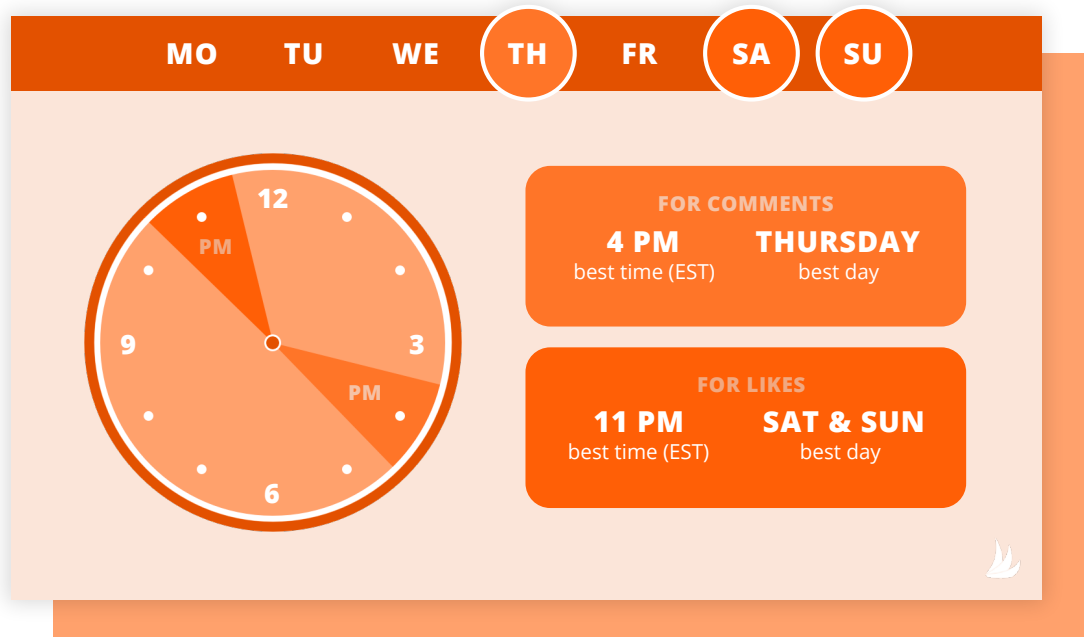
- 23,095 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 7,866 or more
- **For comments:** 4 or more
- **For likes:** 86 or more

If you have a post with 4 or more comments, 86 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 2,652 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 37 or more likes.

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU

12

9 · 3

AM & PM

6

FOR COMMENTS

8 AM & 8 PM   **WEDNESDAY**
best time (EST)   best day

FOR LIKES

8 AM   **SUNDAY**
best time (EST)   best day

In this category, even some of the most successful posts come from accounts with less than 10,000 followers.

Instagram marketers often work toward the goal of getting 10,000 followers, but it's clear from this data that the goal is more difficult in some topic areas.

What do you do if you are in an industry where it's less likely that you will achieve 10,000 followers in a short period of time? We recommend continuing to build engagement via your Instagram profile, then using a linking feature like Tailwind's Smart.bio to help people click through to your blog posts or product pages more easily.

15
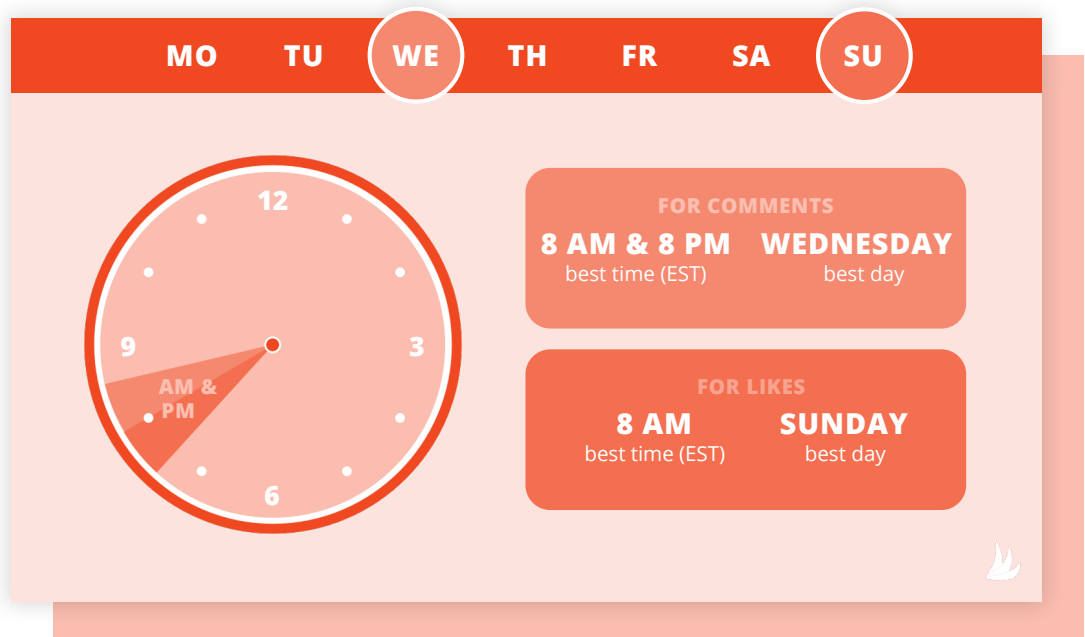
Health and Beauty

About the category:

- 71,193 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 6,144 or more
- **For comments:** 4 or more
- **For likes:** 56 or more

If you have a post with 4 or more comments, 56 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 1,748 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 22 or more likes.

| MO | TU | WE | TH | FR | SA | SU |

FOR COMMENTS

1 AM best time (EST)   **MONDAY** best day

FOR LIKES

4 PM best time (EST)   **WED & SUN** best day
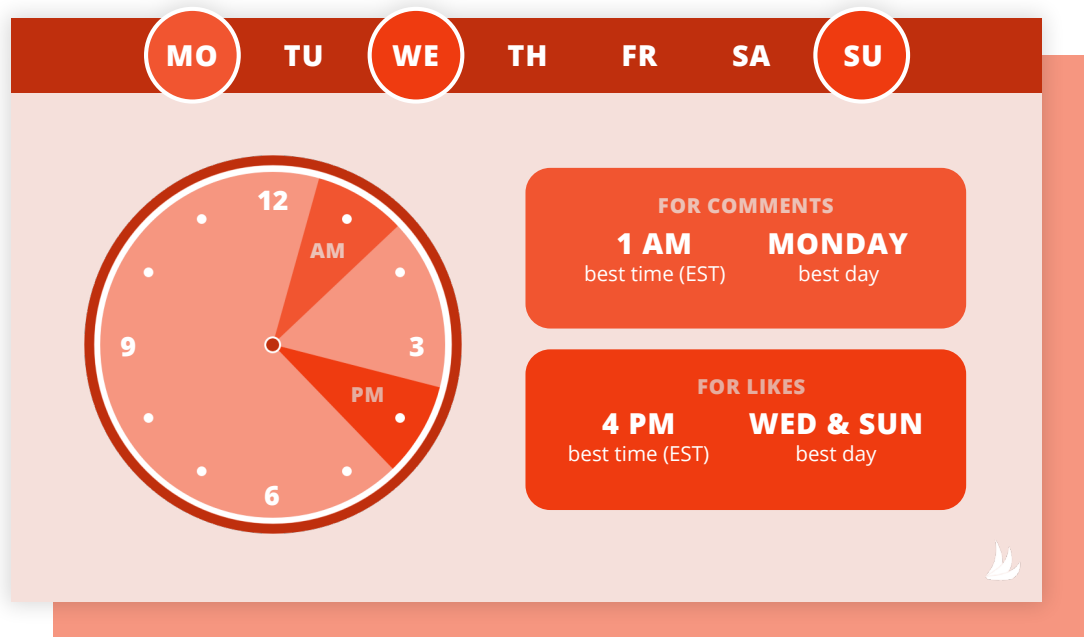
Health and Beauty is one of the few categories where comments fall off during the weekends. Take advantage of higher comment volume on Mondays.

Marketing

About the category:

- 15,611 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 2,068 or more
- **For comments:** 3 or more
- **For likes:** 37 or more

If you have a post with 3 or more comments, 37 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 1,033 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 15 or more likes.

In this category, both likes and comments have peaks late in the U.S. workday, making it hard to post live.

You'll need a plan to have content ready ahead of time to streamline posting.

Tailwind's visual planner allows you to batch create and schedule posts.

Start a Free Trial

Get started Free. No credit card required.

Technology

About the category:

- 40, 229 posts
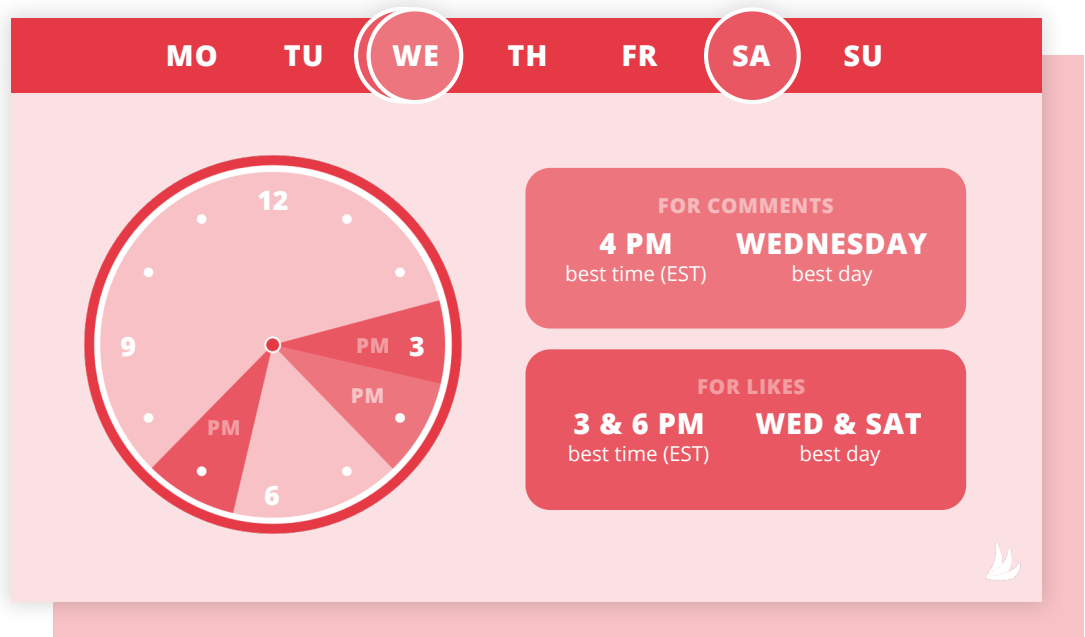
How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 9,343 or more
- **For comments:** 6 or more
- **For likes:** 111 or more

If you have a post with 6 or more comments, 111 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 2,038 or more followers.
- Your post has 2 or more comments or 35 or more likes.

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU

FOR COMMENTS

8 AM
best time (EST)

MON & FRI
best day

FOR LIKES

12 AM
best time (EST)

SUNDAY
best day

There is a significant variation in likes by weekdays in this category, from a low of 208 on Wednesday to a high of 279 on Sunday.

Test Sunday posts with your audience for 6 weeks to see if they respond with more likes on Sunday than other days.

Recreation

About the category:

- 10,110 posts
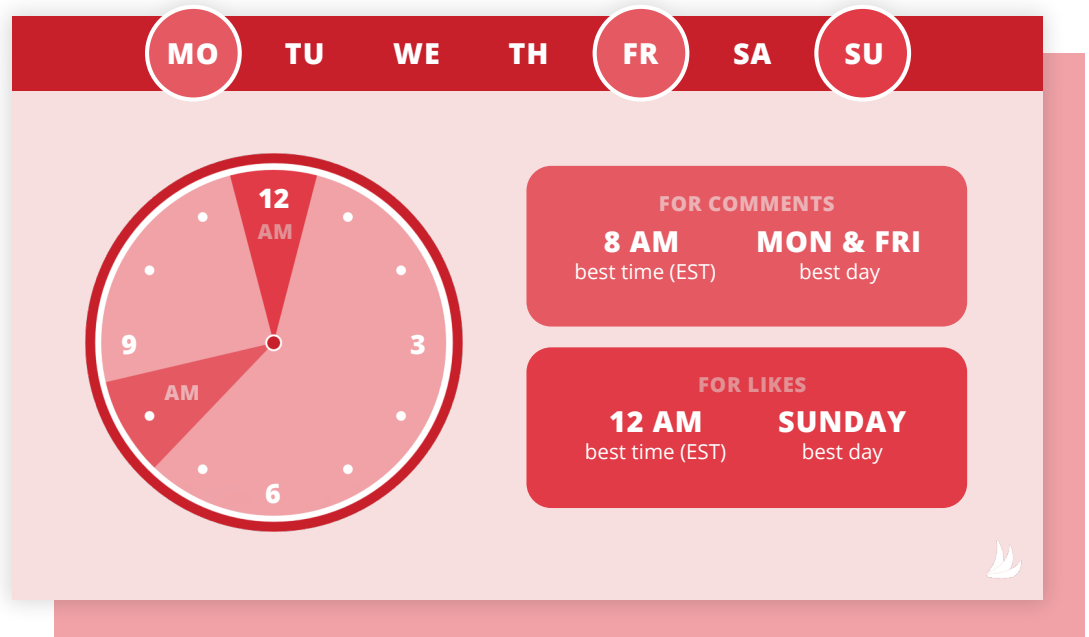
How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 12,622 or more
- **For comments:** 3 or more
- **For likes:** 138 or more

If you have a post with 3 or more comments, 138 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 3,102 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 48 or more likes.

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU

12 AM
PM
9
3
6

FOR COMMENTS
11 PM best time (EST)   **SUNDAY** best day

FOR LIKES
12 AM best time (EST)   **TUESDAY** best day

In this category, there is a sharp increase in both comments and likes for posts on Sundays. Be sure to add to your Instagram feed on this high engagement day, and leverage posts that encourage comments.

Professional Services

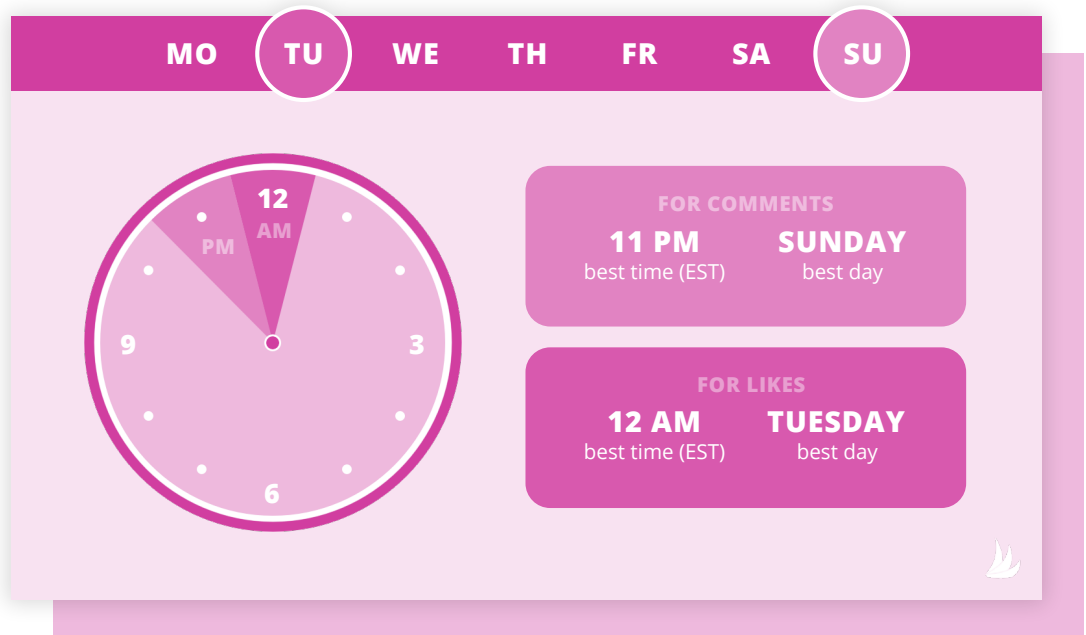**About the category:**

- 81,984 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 3,850 or more
- **For comments:** 3 or more
- **For likes:** 49 or more

If you have a post with 3 or more comments, or 49 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 1,397 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 21 or more likes.

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU

FOR COMMENTS

3 AM
best time (EST)

MONDAY
best day

FOR LIKES

3 & 4 AM
best time (EST)

SAT & SUN
best day
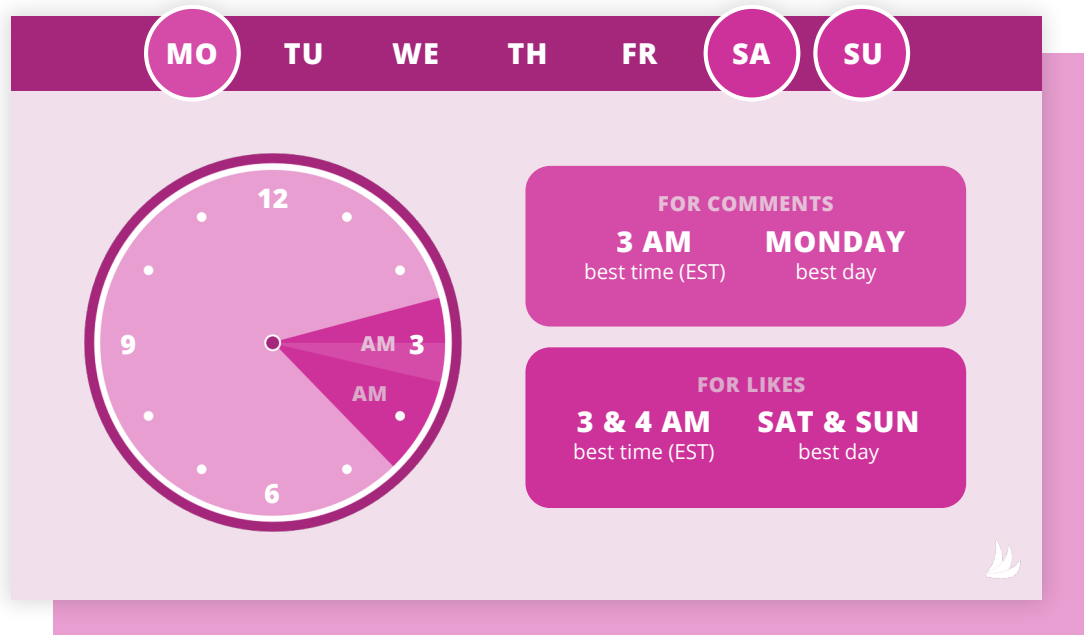
This category is one of the lowest for followers. Keep this in mind when setting follower benchmarks for yourself or your clients.

POSTING TIP

Get more engagement with hashtags. Look for relevant hashtags with lots of recent interactions.

Photographer

About the category:

- 61,888 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 3,343 or more
- **For comments:** 5 or more
- **For likes:** 84 or more

If you have a post with 5 or more comments, or 84 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 1,586 or more followers.
- Your post has 2 or more comments or 42 or more likes.

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU

FOR COMMENTS

5 AM
best time (EST)

MONDAY
best day

FOR LIKES

5 AM
best time (EST)

SUNDAY
best day

POSTING TIP

Search out accounts in your niche to engage with regularly. You never know what could come of it!

Personal Brand

About the category:

- 20,990 posts
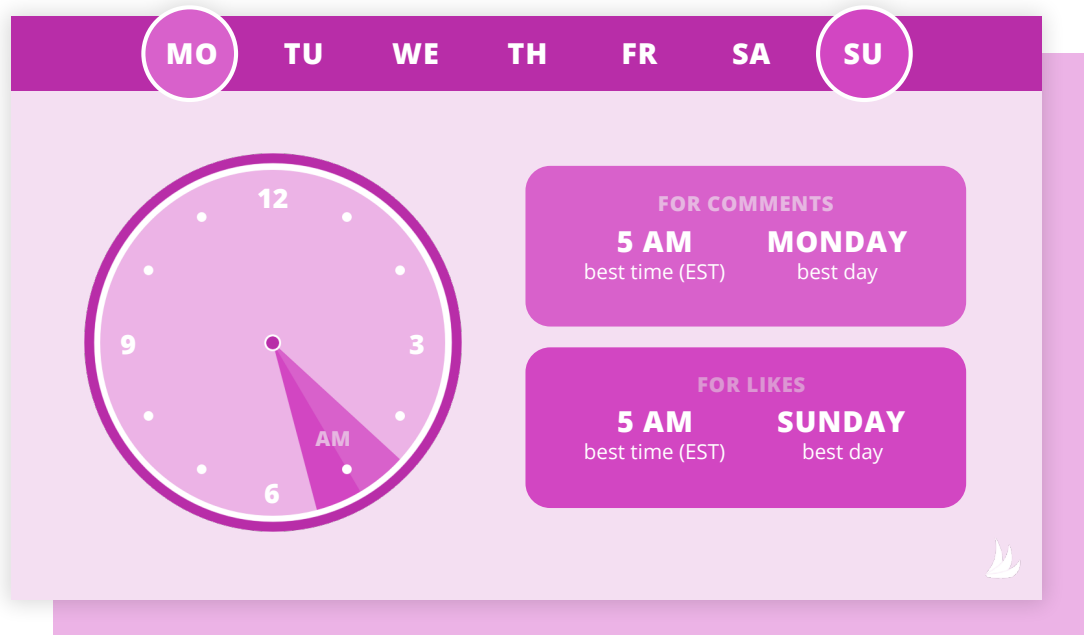
How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 10,266 or more
- **For comments:** 8 or more
- **For likes:** 125 or more

If you have a post with 8 or more comments, or 125 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 2,668 or more followers.
- Your post has 2 or more comments or 34 or more likes.

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU

FOR COMMENTS

11 PM best time (EST) **MONDAY** best day

FOR LIKES

5 AM best time (EST) **THURS & SUN** best day

Non-Profit

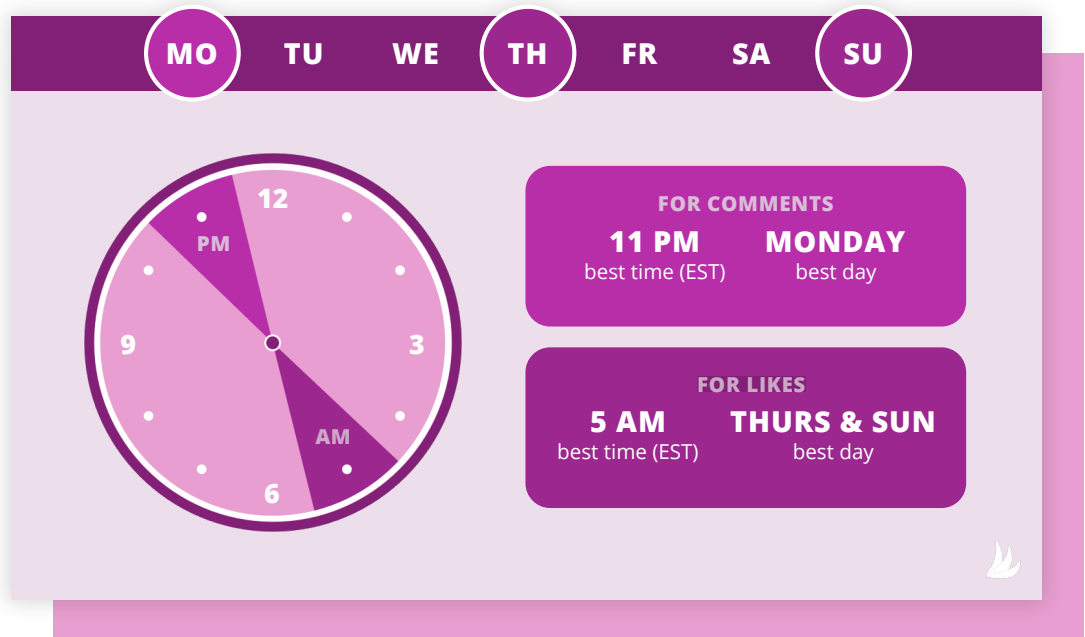**About the category:**

- 36,101 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 8,234 or more
- **For comments:** 4 or more
- **For likes:** 108 or more

If you have a post with 4 or more comments, 108 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 1,841 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 35 or more likes.

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU

FOR COMMENTS

12 & 3 AM
best time (EST)

SUNDAY
best day

FOR LIKES

12 AM
best time (EST)

SUNDAY
best day

POSTING TIP

Help people connect with you regularly: Post to Instagram every day.

Media

About the category:
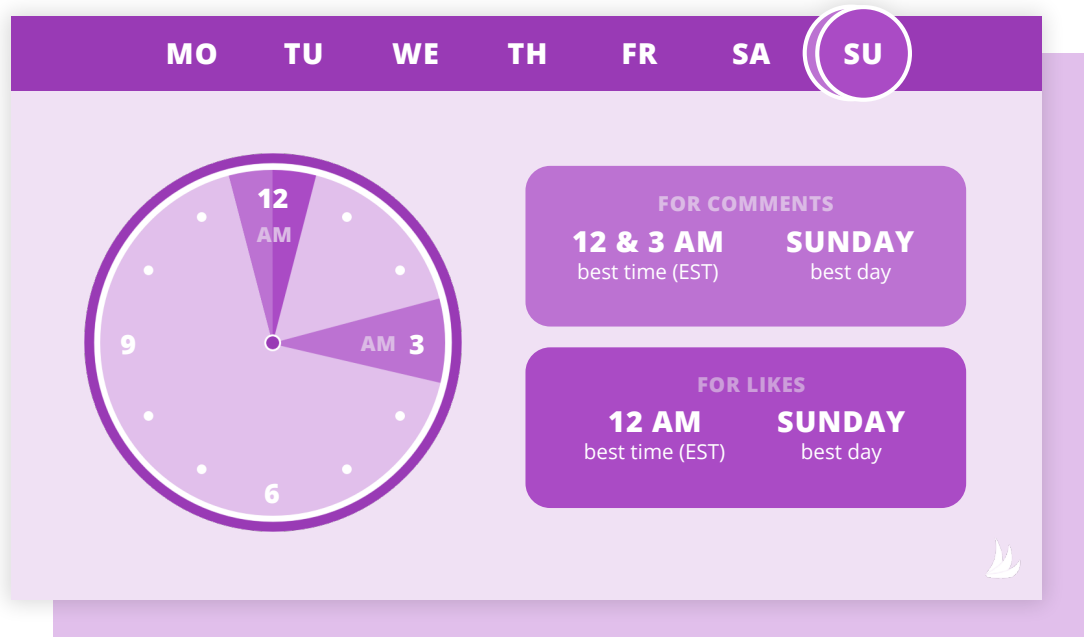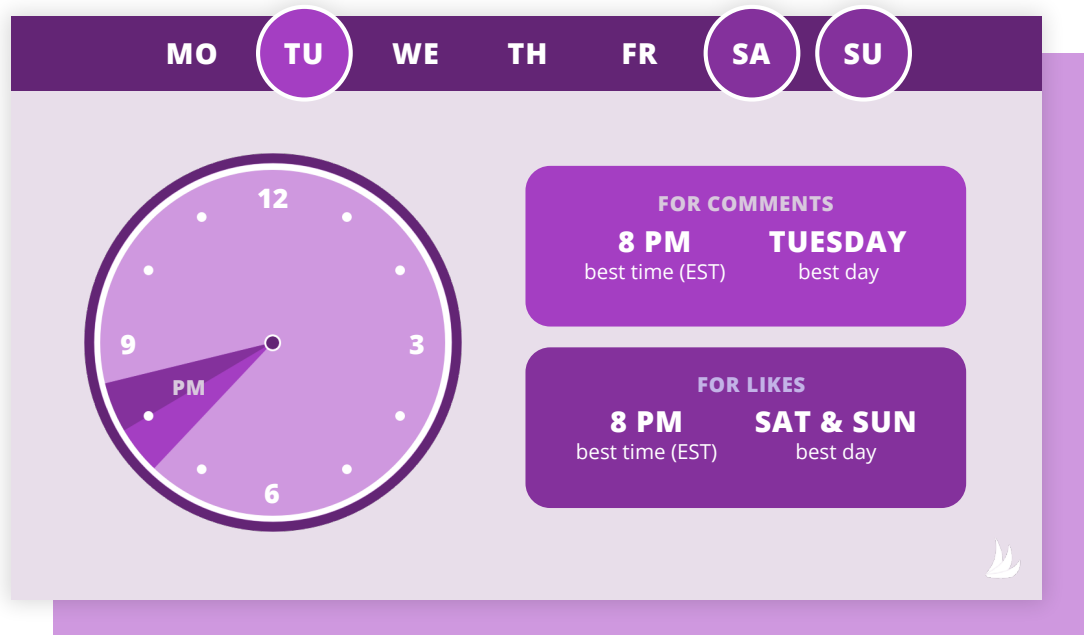
- 23,680 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 42,966 or more
- **For comments:** 8 or more
- **For likes:** 388 or more

If you have a post with 8 or more comments, 388 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 5,579 or more followers.
- Your post has 2 or more comments or 71 or more likes.

| MO | TU | WE | TH | FR | SA | SU |

FOR COMMENTS
8 PM   **TUESDAY**
best time (EST)   best day

FOR LIKES
8 PM   **SAT & SUN**
best time (EST)   best day

POSTING TIP

Increase engagement by sharing the love. Say something nice about another account on Instagram and tag them!

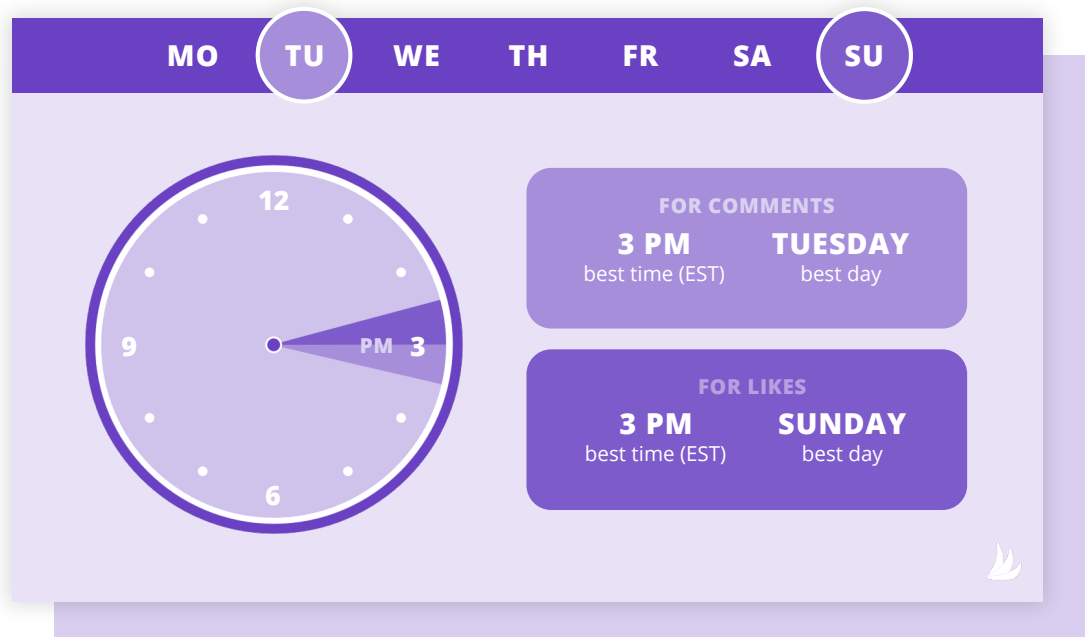# Clothing and Apparel

About the category:

- 183,190 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 10,534 or more
- **For comments:** 3 or more
- **For likes:** 73 or more

If you have a post with 3 or more comments, 73 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 2,527 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 27 or more likes.

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU

FOR COMMENTS
3 PM   **TUESDAY**
best time (EST)   best day

FOR LIKES
3 PM   **SUNDAY**
best time (EST)   best day

POSTING TIP

Inspire your followers to watch your story by creating a tutorial or quick demo.

Creative Services

About the category:

- 78,815 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 5,964 or more
- **For comments:** 4 or more
- **For likes:** 82 or more

If you have a post with 4 or more comments, 82 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 1,803 or more followers.
- Your post has 1 or more comments or 34 or more likes.

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU

12 AM & PM

FOR COMMENTS

12 AM
best time (EST)

TUESDAY
best day

FOR LIKES

11 AM & 12 PM
best time (EST)

SAT & SUN
best day
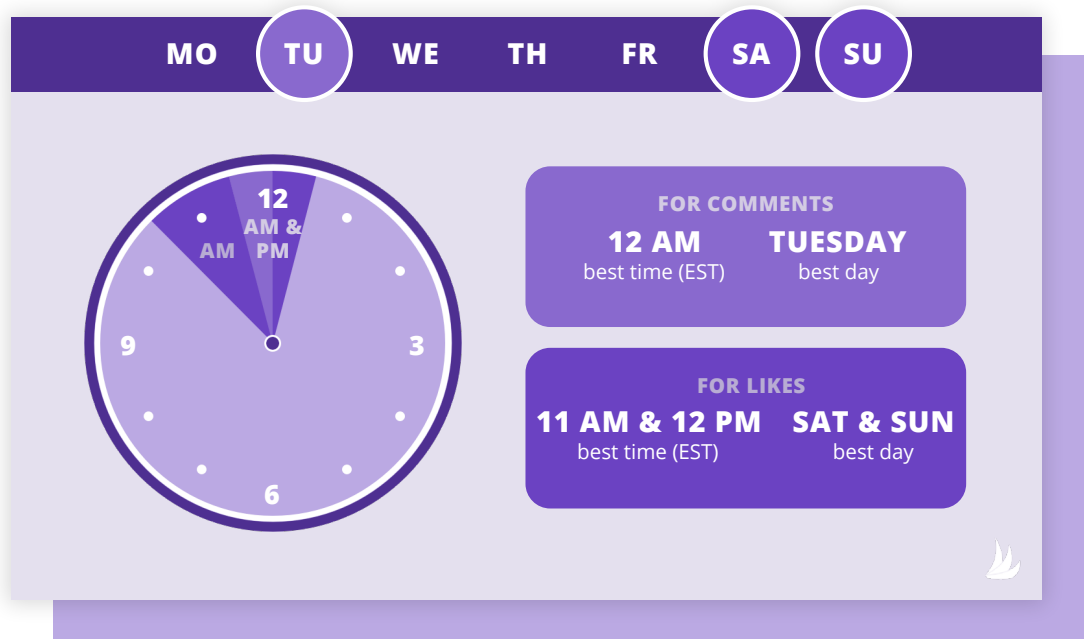
POSTING TIP

Ask a question in your caption to encourage your followers to comment. Don't forget the emoji! 👇

Blogger

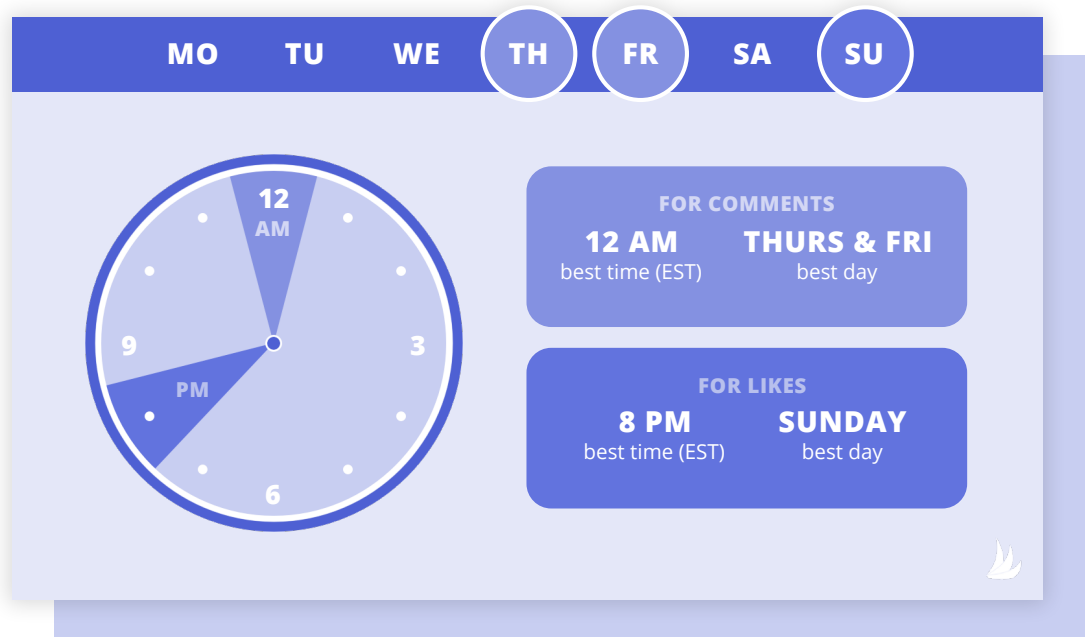**About the category:**

- 163,798 posts

How do you compare?

Top 25% of posts

- **For followers:** 11,492 or more
- **For comments:** 13 or more
- **For likes:** 168 or more

If you have a post with 13 or more comments, or 168 or more likes, you are doing well!

You are in the top 50% for your category if:

- Your account has 2,841 or more followers.
- Your post has 3 or more comments or 55 or more likes.

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU

FOR COMMENTS

12 AM
best time (EST)

THURS & FRI
best day

FOR LIKES

8 PM
best time (EST)

SUNDAY
best day

The personal nature of blogging and the habit of encouraging comments on the blog post itself may lead to high comment volume on Instagram posts.

Methodology

The data referenced here was used to develop an app that recommends the best times to post on Instagram. To achieve the most personalized and accurate times to post on Instagram, we segmented users into one of categories and analyzed post history for three months from the time of execution. We aimed to produce a collaborative filtering model that best approximates a post's *engagement ratio*. To avoid any artifacts of stale behavior, post history was filtered to include only the past three months from the start of execution time. For each user, we took the mean engagement history of posts grouped by day and hour stamp (for example, Monday at 4 p.m. UTC); this process transformed the post history into a matrix of engagement ratios where each row represented a user, and each column a time slot. Time slots in which the user had not posted were represented with zero (indicating they have no historical engagement at that time).

To produce recommendations via collaborative filtering, we employed *Singular Value Decomposition*, a matrix factorization method that aimed to model the underlying shape of data within the matrix. By reducing noise in this model, we estimated the engagement ratios based on a more "ideal" representation of the data. A key effect of this method is the abstraction of a user's data into a model that weighs it against other users that are geometrically similar. We execute this method on matrices representing each of the segments along with one representing all Instagram users for which we have access.

Once estimations are produced, we rank time slots based on estimated engagements. Because there is no discernible correlation with day of the week, estimation is focused on hour of day. To avoid clustered recommendations (i.e. recommending both Monday at 4 p.m. and Monday at 5 p.m.), days of the week are cycled along with ranked hours until the requested number of posting times has been reached. By doing this, we guarantee that a user will not receive two recommendations within the same day unless they request more recommendations than there are days in the week.

Recommended Resources

Take the Guesswork Out of Instagram with a Smart Assistant. Tailwind enables anyone to confidently create scroll-stopping posts.

If you're new to Instagram marketing, check out our **Instagram 101 Webinar**.

And, if you'd like to keep up with all of the latest Instagram marketing techniques, you can find them **here**.