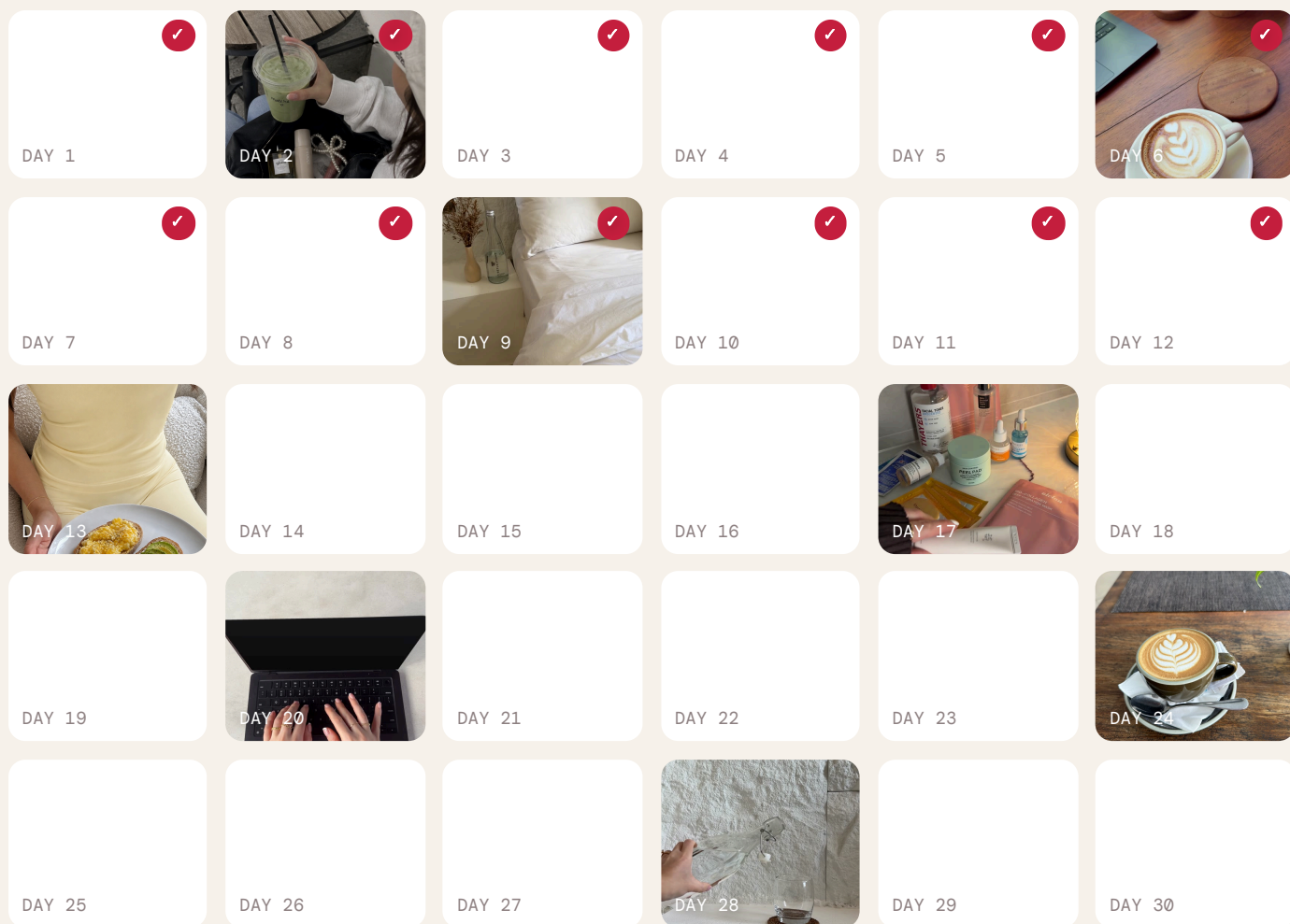




THE INSEASON GROWTH PLAYBOOK

The 30-Day Instagram Growth Playbook

A calm, day-by-day plan to grow an audience that actually buys from you

Inside this book

How Instagram growth really works now, how to set up a profile that turns visitors into followers, which formats to use for reach, saves and sales, and a 30-day plan with one clear task a day. Built for creators and small businesses, and it works whether or not you show your face.

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How growth works now

The short version

Instagram growth comes from two things working together: being shown to new people, and giving those people a clear reason to follow once they land on your profile.

The first part is about content. Instagram now recommends a lot of posts to people who don't follow you yet, especially Reels and carousels. Whether it keeps showing your post depends on how the first people who see it react: do they watch to the end, swipe through, save it, send it to a friend?

The second part is about your profile. Someone sees one good post, taps your name, and decides in a few seconds whether you're worth following. If your profile clearly says who you help and shows more posts like the one they liked, they follow. If it's a mix of unrelated posts with a vague bio, they leave.

Get shown to new people. Then give them a clear reason to follow.

This playbook works on both, a little each day, for 30 days.

What Instagram pays attention to

Instagram doesn't publish its exact formula, but it has been fairly open about the signals that matter most. The ones worth building your content around:

- **Watch time.** For Reels, whether people watch most or all of it, and whether they rewatch. A short Reel that people watch twice beats a long one they leave halfway through.
- **Shares (sends).** When someone sends your post to a friend in a DM or shares it to their story, that's one of the strongest signals there is. It means "this is worth someone else's time".
- **Saves.** People save things they want to come back to: tips, recipes, checklists, ideas. Saves tell Instagram your post has lasting value.

- **Likes and comments relative to reach.** Not the raw number, but how many of the people who saw it reacted.
- **Originality.** Instagram has said it favours original content over reposts of other people's work. Your own clips, your own words and your own designs do better than recycled ones.

Watch

Do people watch to the end, or twice?

Send

Do they pass it to a friend?

Save

Do they keep it for later?

Follow

Do they want more of it?

What this means in practice: make posts that people want to keep or pass on. Teach something useful, say something people relate to, or show something beautiful enough to save for later.

Reach comes in waves

When you post, Instagram usually shows the post to a small group first, often a mix of your followers and people with similar interests. If they respond well, it's shown to a bigger group, and so on. That's why one post can get ten times the reach of another made the same week.

Two things follow from this. First, you can't judge an account by one post; look at patterns over weeks. Second, every post is a fresh chance. A small account can have a post reach thousands of people if the post itself is strong.

Followers aren't the goal, they're the side effect

A follower count is a lagging number. What you actually want is the right people seeing your work regularly, trusting you and eventually buying, booking or joining. A smaller account with a clear focus and engaged followers usually earns more than a bigger, scattered one.

So throughout this plan, we'll measure the things that lead somewhere: reach to non-followers, shares, saves, profile visits, follows from posts and clicks on your link.

FACELESS IS FINE

Everything in this playbook works without showing your face. Hands, objects, spaces, text on screen and voiceovers can carry a whole account. What matters is a clear voice and a consistent look.

Set up to grow

Know who you're talking to

Before you change anything else, write one sentence: "I help [who] [get what result], without [the thing they hate]."

- "I help busy mums cook calm weeknight dinners without a full food shop."
- "We help local professionals feel strong in 30-minute reformer classes, without the gym crowds."
- "I help new beauty therapists fill their books without dancing on Reels."

YOUR TURN

I help _____ get _____, without _____.

This sentence shapes your bio, your content and your hooks. If you're a business, swap "I help" for what you offer: "Small-batch candles for people who love a slow evening at home."

Your promise: why follow?

People follow when they expect more of something they liked. Finish this line: "Follow for _____."

"Follow for easy weeknight dinners." "Follow for daily skin tips from a dermal therapist." "Follow for a slow-living café diary from the Gold Coast."

YOUR TURN

Follow for _____.

If you can't finish that line in a few words, your account is probably doing too many things. Narrow it until you can.

Choose three or four content pillars

Content pillars are the few topics you post about again and again. They keep your feed focused and stop you starting from scratch each day. Most accounts do well with three or four:

PILLAR	WHAT IT DOES	EXAMPLES
Teach	Earns saves and trust	Tips, how-tos, mistakes to avoid, checklists
Show	Shows your work, product or results	Before and after, product in use, a finished project
Share	Builds connection	Behind the scenes, your story, opinions, a day in the life
Invite	Turns followers into customers	Offers, new products, bookings, what's included, FAQs

A healthy mix for most small businesses is roughly: Teach 40 percent, Show 25 percent, Share 25 percent and Invite 10 percent. If you have something to sell, you can sell more often than you think, as long as most of your posts give something first.

Optimise your profile

Your profile is where a viewer becomes a follower. Go through each part.

Name field

The name field (the bold line under your photo, not your @handle) is searchable. Use it for your name or business name plus one keyword people would search: "Mia | Pilates Studio Brisbane" or "Slow Mornings Café | Brunch".

Bio

You have 150 characters. A simple structure:

- 1 **Who you help or what you offer.** Your sentence from above, shortened.
- 2 **Proof or personality.** One detail that makes you credible or memorable: "Dermal therapist, 8 years", "Hand-poured in small batches", "Est. 2019".
- 3 **The next step.** What should they do? "Free guide below", "Book a class", "Shop the new range".

Skip the emoji walls and the inspirational quotes. Clear beats clever.

Profile photo

A logo for businesses, a friendly photo for personal brands, or a simple brand mark for faceless accounts. Make sure it's readable at the tiny size it shows in comments.

Link in bio

You can add up to five links. Put the most important one first. If you use a link page, keep it short: three or four buttons, with the main action at the top.

Highlights

Highlights are your shop window for stories. Four to six is plenty. Useful ones: Start here, Menu or Services, Prices, Reviews (real ones only), FAQ, Results or Before and after. Use simple matching covers.

Pinned posts

You can pin up to three posts to the top of your grid. Pin:

- 1 Your best-performing post (the one that brought in the most followers).
- 2 A post that explains who you are or what you offer.
- 3 Your current offer, or your most saved tip.

The grid

Instagram shows posts on your profile as tall 3:4 rectangles. Design your posts so the important part sits in the middle and isn't cropped off at the top or bottom. A consistent palette and a few repeating post styles make a profile look planned at a glance, which helps someone decide to follow.

Build a look people recognise

You don't need a designer. You need a few decisions you stick to:

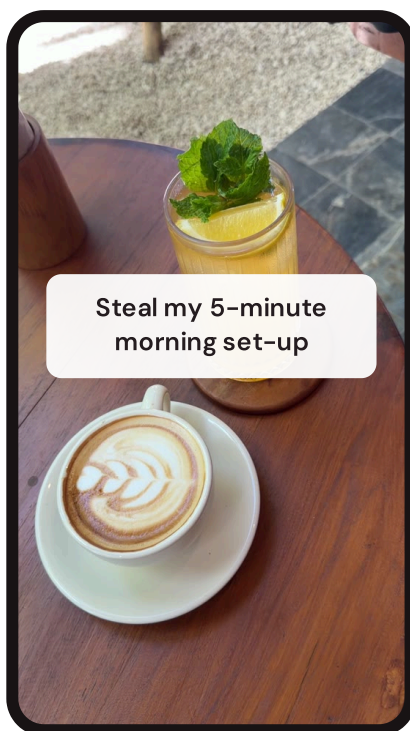
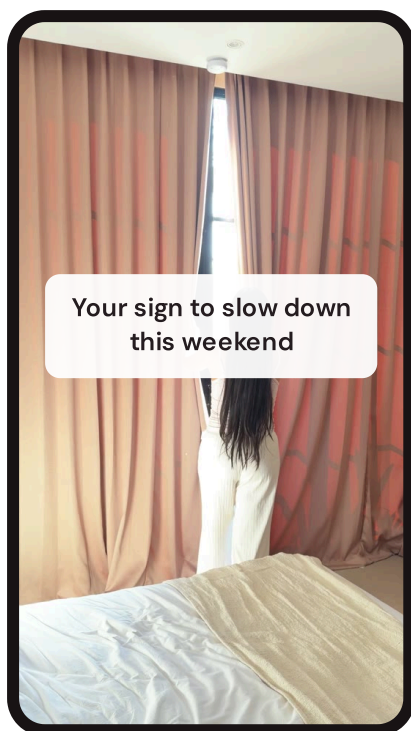
- **Three to five colours.** One or two neutrals, one main colour and an accent.
- **Two fonts.** One for headlines, one for body text. Use them on every template.
- **One editing style.** The same filter or preset on every photo and clip.
- **A few repeating post types.** For example a quote post, a tip carousel, a text-on-B-roll Reel and a product photo. When people see one in their feed, they should know it's yours before they see your name.

The formats

Reels: your reach engine

Reels are still the format most likely to be shown to people who don't follow you. They don't need to be complicated.

Faceless Reel formats that work



- **Text on B-roll.** A calm 5 to 10 second clip with one line of text. The simplest Reel there is, and one of the most effective. Put the hook on screen and the detail in the caption.
- **Voiceover.** B-roll clips with you talking over them. Great for tips and stories.
- **"Steal my..." or "Here's how I..."** Show a process: your morning set-up, how you plan your content, how you pack an order.
- **List Reel.** One clip per point: "3 things I'd tell my first-year-in-business self", with a new clip for each.

- **Before and after.** Show the starting point, then the result. Satisfying to watch, easy to understand without sound.
- **Screen recording.** For anything digital: how you edit a template, plan your week or set up a booking.

Reel basics

- **Hook in the first two seconds.** Movement in the first frame and text on screen straight away.
- **Short is fine.** Many effective Reels are under 15 seconds. Make it as long as it needs to be and no longer.
- **Design for sound off.** Many people watch without sound, so put the key words on screen.
- **Keep text in the safe zone.** Away from the top and bottom of the screen and the right-hand side, where the buttons sit.
- **Write a useful caption.** Expand on the on-screen text and include the words someone would search.
- **Choose a cover that fits your grid.** A clean cover image makes your profile look intentional.

Trial Reels

Instagram has a trial Reels option for professional accounts (where it's available) that shows a Reel to non-followers first, so you can test an idea without it going to your followers. It's a low-risk way to try new hooks and formats. If one does well, you can share it to your followers too.

Carousels: your save engine

Carousels are multi-slide posts (up to 20 slides). They're brilliant for teaching, because people swipe through, spend time on the post and save it to come back to. Instagram sometimes shows a carousel again to someone who didn't swipe the first time, opening on a later slide, so make every slide able to stand on its own.

A carousel that gets saved:

- 1 **Slide 1:** the hook. Big, clear text.
- 2 **Slide 2:** why it matters, or the problem.
- 3 **Slides 3 to 8:** one point per slide, with a short headline and a line of detail.
- 4 **Second-to-last slide:** the summary or key takeaway.
- 5 **Last slide:** what to do next. "Save this for later", "Send it to a friend who needs it", or "More in the link in bio".

One point per slide. If a slide needs more than about 40 words, it's two slides.

Keep text large and slides uncluttered.

Single image and photo posts

Single images are best for announcements, a beautiful product shot, a quote or a moment you want to share. They usually get less reach than Reels and carousels, but they help your grid look complete and they're quick to make.

Stories: your relationship engine

Stories mostly reach people who already follow you. That makes them the place to build trust and to sell. A few ideas for every day:

- **Polls and quizzes.** "Which one should we stock next?" Quick, fun and they get people tapping.
- **Question box.** "Ask me anything about _____." Answer in the next few stories, then save the best to a highlight.
- **Behind the scenes.** Packing orders, setting up the studio, the morning coffee before opening.
- **Share your new post.** Tell people why you made it, with a sticker linking to it.
- **The soft sell.** Remind people what you offer, with a link sticker straight to it.

A short story sequence (three to six frames) that tells a little story beats twenty unrelated frames.

Captions and hashtags

A good caption does three jobs: it adds detail, it helps people find you in search, and it tells people what to do next.

- **First line:** a second hook, because it's all people see before "more".
- **Body:** the useful part. Short paragraphs, line breaks, plain words.
- **Keywords:** the phrases your audience would search ("easy brunch ideas", "Pilates for beginners", "Brisbane bridal makeup"). Instagram search reads captions, so natural keywords help people find you.
- **Call to action:** one clear ask. Save, send, comment a word, or visit the link.
- **Hashtags:** a few specific, relevant ones at most. Keywords in the caption matter more than a long block of hashtags.

Collabs and community

- **Collab posts** let you post with another account so it appears on both profiles and both audiences see it. Partner with businesses that share your audience but don't compete: a café and a florist, a Pilates studio and a smoothie bar, a photographer and a stylist.
- **Comment with care.** Leave genuine, specific comments on accounts your audience follows. Not "Great post!", but something that adds to the conversation. People notice, and so do their followers.
- **Reply to everyone**, especially in the first hour after you post. Conversations under your post are a strong signal and they build loyalty.

04

The 30-day plan

How the plan works

Each day has one main task that takes 20 to 60 minutes. Some days are about setting up, some are about making content and some are about learning from your results. If you miss a day, pick up where you left off: the order matters more than the dates.

The posting rhythm for the month is realistic for a busy person:

3
Reels a week

2
carousels a week

4
days of stories a week

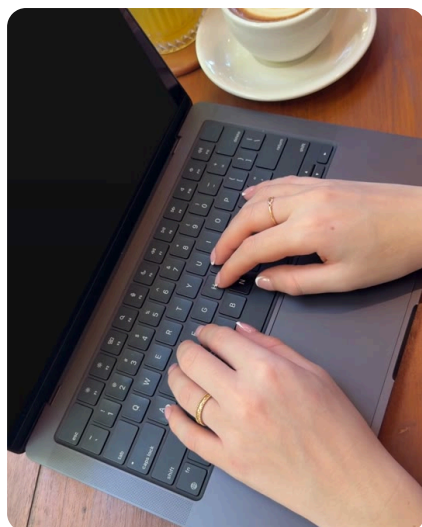
15
minutes of engagement
on posting days

If that's too much right now, halve it. Consistency at a smaller level beats a burst of posting followed by silence.

BATCH, DON'T SCRAMBLE

You'll make most of the week's content in one sitting. It's faster, your posts look more consistent, and you're never stuck at 8pm wondering what to post.

Week 1: Foundations



WEEK 1: SET THE FOUNDATIONS

Goal: a profile that turns visitors into followers, and your first week of posts ready to go.

DAY 1



Write your foundations

Write your "I help..." sentence and your "Follow for..." promise. Choose your three or four content pillars and list five post ideas for each. That's 15 to 20 ideas before you've posted a thing.

DAY 2



Fix your profile

Update your name field with a keyword, rewrite your bio using the three-part structure, and set up your link in bio with your main action first. Check your profile photo is clear at a small size.

DAY 3



Decide your look

Pick your colours, two fonts and one editing style. Choose four repeating post types (for example: tip carousel, text-on-B-roll Reel, quote post, product or service photo). Set up a template for each so future posts take minutes.

DAY 4



Research your space

Find ten accounts your ideal follower already follows, both big and small. For each, note: their most-saved-looking posts, the hooks they use, and what people ask in their comments. Those questions are your next posts. Follow the accounts so you can engage with them.

DAY 5



Batch your first week

Make 3 Reels and 2 carousels in one sitting. Use the hook bank and your pillar ideas. For Reels, pick B-roll that matches your look and add one strong line of text. Write all five captions.

DAY 6



Post and engage

Post your first Reel. Spend 15 minutes replying to every comment and leaving thoughtful comments on five accounts from your Day 4 list. Post three or four stories, including a poll.

DAY 7



Set up highlights and pinned posts

Create four to six highlights (start with "Start here" and your services or menu). Pin your strongest existing post, or your first new carousel, to the top of your grid.

Week 2: Find what works

Week 2 is for learning, not for perfect. Post, watch what people do, adjust.

Goal: post consistently and start learning which topics and formats your audience responds to.

DAY 8



Post a carousel

Post your first teaching carousel. Ask a question in the caption to invite comments, and reply to every one.

DAY 9



Stories that start conversations

Post a question box: "What's the one thing you struggle with when it comes to _____?" Screenshot the best answers (with permission, or anonymously) and add them to your ideas list.

DAY 10



Post a Reel

Post a text-on-B-roll Reel using a curiosity or relatable hook. Spend 15 minutes engaging before and after you post.

DAY 11



Try a trial Reel or a new format

Test something different: a trial Reel with a new hook style, a voiceover, or a before-and-after. The point is to learn, not to be perfect.

DAY 12



Batch week 3

Make next week's 3 Reels and 2 carousels in one sitting. Lean slightly towards the topics that got the most comments or saves so far.

DAY 13



Post a carousel and a story sequence

Post your second carousel. In stories, tell a short behind-the-scenes story in three to five frames and finish with a link sticker to your new post.

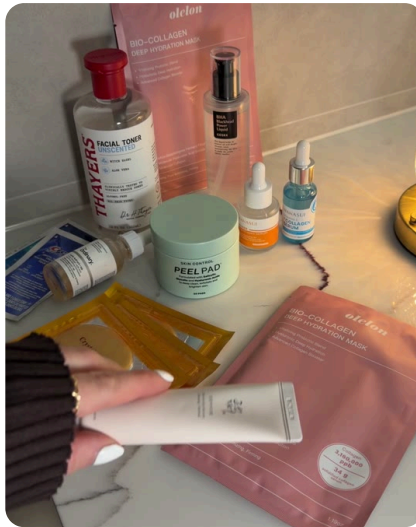
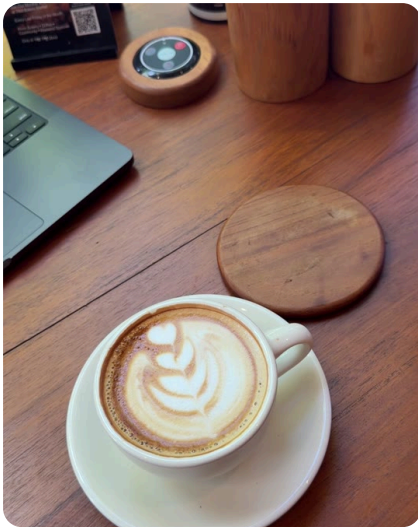
DAY 14



Your first weekly review

Open your insights and fill in the weekly review (at the back of this book). For each post note reach, shares, saves and follows. Ask: which post brought in the most new followers, and why do you think it worked?

Week 3: Double down



WEEK 3: DOUBLE DOWN ON WHAT WORKS

Goal: make more of what's working and start building relationships that grow your reach.

DAY 15



Remake your best post

Take your best post from the last two weeks and make a new version: the same idea with a new hook, a new clip, or turned from a carousel into a Reel (or the other way round). Good ideas deserve more than one post.

DAY 16



Post and reach out

Post a Reel. Then message one business or creator with a similar audience and suggest a collab post or a story swap. Keep it short and specific about what's in it for them.

DAY 17



Answer a real question

Turn one of your audience's questions from Day 9 into a carousel. Use their wording in the hook. These posts tend to get saved and shared because they answer something people genuinely asked.

DAY 18



Share your story

Post something from your Share pillar: why you started, a lesson you learned the hard way, or a day in the life. Personal posts often bring fewer new followers but deepen the connection with the ones you have.

DAY 19



Batch week 4

Make next week's content. Include one post from your Invite pillar: what you offer, who it's for and how to get it.

DAY 20



Post a Reel and tidy your highlights

Post a Reel. Add your best story answers and any customer messages (with permission) to your highlights so new visitors see them.

DAY 21



Second weekly review

Fill in the weekly review. Compare it with week 2. What's improving? Which pillar gets the most saves? Which hook style gets the most shares? Write down three things to keep doing and one thing to stop.

Week 4: Turn followers into customers

Most of your posts give. Some of them ask. Week 4 is where you ask, kindly and clearly.

Goal: make it easy for the right followers to buy, book or join, and set up a rhythm you can keep.

DAY 22



Make your offer clear

Post a carousel that explains what you offer: who it's for, what's included, what it costs or how to find out, and how to get it. Keep it friendly and practical, like you'd explain it to a friend.

DAY 23



Set up a "comment for the link" post

Choose something useful to give away: a free guide, a discount, a checklist or a booking link. Ask people to comment a word to get it. You can send links manually or use a Meta-approved messaging tool to reply automatically. These posts get comments and start conversations that often lead to sales.

DAY 24



A story selling sequence

Tell a short story over four to six frames: the problem your customer has, what you made to solve it, what it looks like in action, and a link sticker to buy or book. Selling in stories feels natural because your warmest followers are watching.

DAY 25



Post your best-performing format

Whatever has worked best this month (perhaps a text-on-B-roll Reel or a tips carousel), make another one. Then spend 15 minutes engaging with your community.

DAY 26



Plan next month

Look at the season and dates coming up: holidays, seasonal changes, launches and local events. Map your next four weeks with one theme per week. Seasonal posts work best when they go up a few weeks before the moment, not on the day.

DAY 27



Build your content bank

Save your best-performing hooks, captions and templates in one place. Make a list of 20 post ideas for next month, sorted by pillar. Future you will thank you.

DAY 28



Collab or community post

Publish a collab post if you arranged one, or post something that invites your audience in: a "this or that" carousel, a question post, or a "share your..." prompt.

DAY 29



Final review

Fill in the last weekly review and compare your first week with your last. Look at: reach to non-followers, total follows, saves, shares, profile visits and link clicks. Write down what you've learned about your audience in three sentences.

DAY 30



Set your rhythm

Decide the posting rhythm you can keep for the next three months. Block a weekly batching session in your calendar. Then celebrate: you've built a system, not just a month of posts.

Measure and keep going

The numbers that matter

You'll find these in Instagram's insights (professional accounts):

NUMBER	WHAT IT TELLS YOU	WHAT TO DO WITH IT
Reach to non-followers	Whether Instagram is showing you to new people	If it's low, focus on stronger hooks and more Reels and carousels
Shares (sends)	Whether people find you worth passing on	Make more posts like your most-shared ones
Saves	Whether your content is useful enough to keep	Teach more of what gets saved
Follows from a post	Which posts turn viewers into followers	Pin your best one, and make more like it
Profile visits	Whether posts make people curious about you	If visits are high but follows low, improve your bio and pinned posts
Link clicks	Whether followers take the next step	If low, make your offer and link clearer

One quiet week isn't a problem. Three quiet weeks is a signal.

Look at trends over weeks, not single posts. One quiet week isn't a problem; three quiet weeks is a signal to change something.

When things feel slow

- **Reach dropped?** Check your hooks first. Then check you've been posting consistently. Try a trial Reel with a new format.
- **Lots of views, few follows?** Your post is interesting but your profile doesn't show why to follow. Tighten your bio and pinned posts.

- **Followers but no sales?** Post from your Invite pillar more often, make your link easier, and talk about your offer in stories.
- **Running out of ideas?** Go back to your audience's questions, your best posts and the hook bank. Remaking a good idea is not cheating.

Caption formulas

The tip caption "[Hook as a statement]. Here's why: [one or two lines]. Try this: [the tip]. Save this for next time you [situation]."

The story caption "[Moment that set the scene]. [What happened]. [What you learned]. Has this happened to you?"

The offer caption "If you [problem], this is for you. [What it is] helps you [result] without [what they hate]. [What's included]. [How to get it]."

Call-to-action library

- Save this for later.
- Send this to someone who needs to hear it.
- Which one are you, A or B? Tell me below.
- Comment "GUIDE" and I'll send it to you.
- Follow for more [your promise].
- The link is in my bio if you want the full version.
- Tap the link sticker in my stories to book.

Weekly review worksheet

Fill this in every Sunday or Monday. It takes ten minutes and it's where the real growth comes from.

POST	FORMAT	PILLAR	REACH	SHARES	SAVES	FOLLOWS

YOUR TURN

My best post this week was...

YOUR TURN

I think it worked because...

YOUR TURN

Next week I'll make more of...

YOUR TURN

Next week I'll stop...

Your 30-day checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Day 1: Foundations written | ☐ Day 9: Question box |
| ☐ Day 2: Profile updated | ☐ Day 10: Reel posted |
| ☐ Day 3: Look decided and templates set up | ☐ Day 11: New format tested |
| ☐ Day 4: Ten accounts researched | ☐ Day 12: Week 3 batched |
| ☐ Day 5: Week 1 batched | ☐ Day 13: Carousel and story sequence |
| ☐ Day 6: First Reel posted | ☐ Day 14: First weekly review |
| ☐ Day 7: Highlights and pinned posts | ☐ Day 15: Best post remade |
| ☐ Day 8: First carousel posted | ☐ Day 16: Collab message sent |

- ☐ Day 17: Audience question answered
- ☐ Day 18: Story post
- ☐ Day 19: Week 4 batched
- ☐ Day 20: Reel and highlights
- ☐ Day 21: Second weekly review
- ☐ Day 22: Offer carousel
- ☐ Day 23: Comment-for-the-link post
- ☐ Day 24: Story selling sequence
- ☐ Day 25: Best format again
- ☐ Day 26: Next month planned
- ☐ Day 27: Content bank built
- ☐ Day 28: Collab or community post
- ☐ Day 29: Final review
- ☐ Day 30: Rhythm set

INSEASON STUDIO

Want the templates, B-roll and stickers to go with this?

INSEASON Studio is a content library for creators and small businesses: editable Canva templates, faceless B-roll, stock photos and sticker packs, all in one cohesive look, with a fresh drop every month. Everything comes with a commercial licence, so you can use it for your own brand and your clients.

Take a look at inseason.studio

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