

HASHTAG HACKS

Hash out your #hashtag strategy.

BY WENDY LEWIS

A hashtag is just a keyword phrase with a pound sign (#) in front of it that you add to a post. It provides additional context to your post. The words you use to tag the content may or may not be already used in the post. By assigning a hashtag, you are essentially make your post more findable by linking it to a specific theme or topic that others are searching for, like #CosmeticSurgery.

You can use hashtags anywhere in your social media posts: in the beginning, at the end, or within. Hashtags are searchable on most social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), but not on Pinterest (no idea why).

Hashtags connect content and conversations from different users into a single stream. If Twitter users who aren't otherwise connected mention the same topic by using a specific hashtag, their tweets will appear in the same stream. Hashtags can lead you to a trending topic, for example #Manchester.

When used the right way, hashtags are a vital way to make posts more visible and increase engagement. They allow users to aggregate posts and images, and keep like-minded individuals updated on a specific theme or topic.

Hashtags are often used to connect content around common themes, such as:

- **Meetings or conferences:** #AAD2017 #ASAPS2017
- **Disasters or emergencies:** #Aleppo #PrayForNice
- **Holidays or celebrations:** #MothersDay #SkinCancerAwareness
- **Pop culture:** #Beyonce #HouseofCards
- **Special interests:** #MustLoveDogs #BeautyGurus
- **General:** #ThursdayHerday #FollowFriday
- **Locations:** #NewYorkCity #Londontown

HASHTAG GENERATORS

Not sure which hashtag to use? Need some inspiration? There are apps for that, too. Try hashtagsapp.com, hashtaggenerator.com, or hashit.com.

FAST FACTS ABOUT HASHTAGS

- Numbers are OK, spaces and special characters are not
- On Instagram, you can add hashtags in the caption and/or comments
- For a post with a hashtag to appear in someone's search, the post must be public not private
- Choose some popular hashtags that are already in use so someone searching for them will find your post
- Create branded hashtags for your practice and use them consistently –#AskDrJones #TheJonesMethod
- Optimum length of a hashtag is about 14 characters; if your hashtag is too long, it will not be memorable and will take up too much space, at least on Twitter
- If your hashtag is short phrase, combine the words and start each word with a capital letter; #LiquidFacelift #SocialMediaMarketing
- You can also abbreviate longer phrases for a hashtag, such as #BBL for #BrazilianButtLift
- You can search for a hashtag on Facebook, by typing it into a URL: www.facebook.com/hashtag/InsertHashtagHere

To get more likes and comments, use at least some relevant and real time trending tags. A hashtag that only resonates with a small circle of people will be less effective. Whereas a hashtag that is being used by many other users takes on a life of its own and adds value all around. ■



Wendy Lewis is President of Wendy Lewis & CO Ltd, a marketing and social media boutique in New York City, and Founder/ Editor-in-Chief of beautyinthebag.com. Reach her at WL@wendylewisco.com.