



The importance of the #hashtag in social media

Hashtags used to be commonplace just for Twitter (or X), but as our knowledge and approach to social media marketing has advanced, the hash symbol has made a strong lodging within most social platforms.

Once you crack what exactly this feature does and how to use it effectively, you can easily reap its benefits on any social channel. In fact, it's nearing foolproof, providing you take time in the early stages to understand its purpose online.

Simply put, hashtags are a way to group together specific topics or subjects which are bound by a keyword or phrase tag. When users click the tagged word, it unveils a string of similar content which all possess the same tag. For context, if we used the hashtag #dogcare, it would list all the posts where #dogcare was mentioned in the caption.

Hashtags are also very good at finding content, not only that you made a direct search for, but that you might be interested in. The way the algorithm works is that when you select your chosen tag, the results will most likely contain similar tags throughout the listed captions. Sticking with the #dogcare example, you may also find tags such as #doglovers and #doggrooming, which open gateways to further browsing.

When a website or social media platform indexes a hashtag, it expands your reach and engages with users who don't already follow you. This helps categorise your messages into bundles which are much more discoverable by those searching for it. Including the hashtag merely speeds up the process of finding your ideal candidates and separates your target audience from general internet users.

Whilst demonstrating the simplicity and user-friendly nature of hashtags is important, there are some ground rules that your social media strategy must have for them to work in full effect:

- Ensure the keyword/s you use are trending and relevant to your service offering. Including the hash symbol in a word that's unrelated to your post is counterproductive and won't put your work in front of the right people.
- Don't use spaces, symbols or punctuation when working with hashtags. It will break the link and the tag won't work.
- Keep the tags short and snappy. They will be easier to remember and don't look so spammy (unlike the paragraphs of tags you often find at the bottom of a page).
- Publicise your social accounts so any non-followers can access your content through the tags you use.

Following the rise of bitesize content, longer captions have become less effective at catching readers' attention on social media. Hashtags are a much quicker way to contextualise posts without wasting time writing copy that most people will end up ignoring. They are particularly useful at summarising important information when you have character limits restricting the wordcount, like on X (formerly Twitter).

In recent years it's become increasingly popular for organisations and individuals alike to support awareness days and worthy causes by using trending hashtags. This way, the public can see you are aware of the social issues that extend beyond your business. In fact, it's almost become an expectation for bigger brands to use their platform to promote what's prevalent at the time and help spread the word.

But your organisation doesn't need to be of a certain status or have a large following to use hashtags. They were organically introduced as a way to categorise messages and make it easier for the average internet user to find out information. The act of using tags isn't complicated, but the power of this symbol is something no business can afford to miss out on.

National Pet Shop Day hashtags

#NationalPetShopDay #PetShopDayUK #LoveYourPetShop #PetShopPower #SupportLocalPets
#VisitYourPetShop #OTCPetAdvice



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