How to Use Hashtags [Infographic]

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Laura M. Donovan, Business2Community
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While you may have learned the symbol for pound as a child, that sign (#) today is called a hashtag. And in the world of Social Media, it turns any word or phrase into a searchable link. It is used so that users on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Google Plus can track and join discussions on topics based on hashtagged key words or phrases.

For example, if you watched the season finale of The Walking Dead Sunday (as I did) and want to see what other fans thought about the end of Season 5 you can type **#TheWalkingDeadSeason5** in the Twitter or Facebook search box to follow the updates about the Season 5 finale, see what other fans thought – and join the conversation.

The hashtag should not be confused with yet another symbol that has been hijacked by Social Media. The @ sign is used to "tag" a person/TV show page/etc. (Using this sign makes people aware that you have tagged them and gives you the opportunity to send them a message.)

For example if you want Taylor Swift to see a Tweet you would place @taylorswift13 in the Tweet and she would be notified there was a Tweet about her. However, if you wanted to talk to other fans about her music you would use the hashtag e.g. #taylorswiftmusic. The same rules apply to Facebook and Instagram.

Businesses, movies, TV shows, etc. create "official" hashtags to start the conversation; however, anyone can create a hashtag. For example, if you wanted to start a conversation with other fans of Cheetos you could hashtag a post or tweet #cheetoloversonly and see if it sparks a conversation.

The basic rules of hashtags: No spaces and no punctuation – and don't make them too long. Also – don't over use them…

While hashtags do the same thing on most platforms, there are a few differences. Here are some of the rules for specific platforms:

Facebook – Hashtags are relatively new to the site. Facebook added hashtag support in June 2013. It still hasn't completely caught on, but users are including hashtags in updates. The ideal number of hashtags to have in an update is 1 to 2. Clicking on a hashtag in an update will take you to a list of updates containing the hashtag. Results are not limited to people in your network.
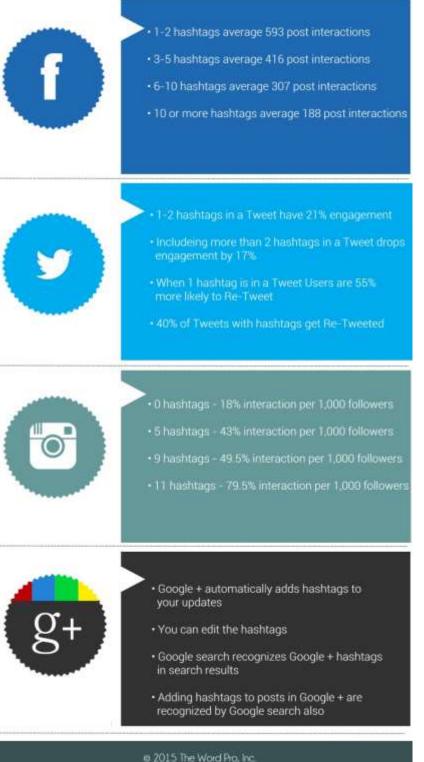
Twitter – This is where hashtags were born, way back to 2007. The first hashtag was used by Chris Messina, see it here. Twitter uses hashtags to show specific topics and conversations. Twitter shows "Trends" in the sidebar which suggests possible hashtags you might be interested in based on your Tweets. You can also filter your results, requesting to see the most popular hashtags and posts from anyone on Twitter, or show hashtags only from the people you follow.

Instagram – Hashtags can be used on photos to share with more people; to discover new accounts to follow; and to gain new followers. There are some Instagram-created hashtags, such as #ThrowbackThursday. Hashtags on Instagram are essentially used to maximize shares.

Google Plus – Hashtags in Google + show the original hashtag post as well as other posts with similar tags and keywords. Google search allows users to search hashtags and displays the results on the right side of the screen. You can also search for Facebook and Twitter hashtags in Google.

Here is a quick guide for #Hashtag use: >>>>>>>

HOW TO USE #HASHTAGS
IN UPDATES/TWEETS/POSTS

- 1-2 hashtags average 593 post interactions
- 3-5 hashtags average 416 post interactions
- 6-10 hashtags average 307 post interactions
- 10 or more hashtags average 188 post interactions

- 1-2 hashtags in a Tweet have 21% engagement
- Includeing more than 2 hashtags in a Tweet drops engagement by 17%
- When 1 hashtag is in a Tweet Users are 55% more likely to Re-Tweet
- 40% of Tweets with hashtags get Re-Tweeted

- 0 hashtags - 18% interaction per 1,000 followers
- 5 hashtags - 43% interaction per 1,000 followers
- 9 hashtags - 49.5% interaction per 1,000 followers
- 11 hashtags - 79.5% interaction per 1,000 followers

- Google + automatically adds hashtags to your updates
- You can edit the hashtags
- Google search recognizes Google + hashtags in search results
- Adding hashtags to posts in Google + are recognized by Google search also

Sources:

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