Hi! My name is Tristan Bravinder. I work on content at the Getty in Los Angeles. Over the past couple of years, we’ve tried to co-opt Instagram for a few different uses. Here’s a look at experiments to try and what we’ve learned.

How to use Instagram to...

1. ............ Tell a story
2. ............ Quiz your users
3. ............ Help visitors plan their week
4. ............ Create an interactive Q&A
5. ............ Create a show
6. ............ Decide what to post on Instagram
7. ............ Ask for feedback
8. ............ Learn when to change strategies

...ps if you have any questions about anything feel free to reach out. tbravinder@getty.edu or @tristaaan on Twitter or @tristyybabyyy on Instagram. (DMs are open)
How to Use Instagram to Tell a Story

Example: After perusing the Getty’s collection, we put together an Instagram story that ended up having an insane amount of engagement. Why? Because it was an actual story. There was a juicy hook and a narrative arc. Each slide made users want to know what happens next. We repurposed the content on the Getty’s Tumblr and received over 170,000 notes to date. Time required: 1-2 hours spent finding a great collection object, writing a script and prepping images in Photoshop. Additional advice: Don’t make the story too long, and make sure each slide only contains a sentence or less of text.

What you’ll need:
1. A great story that can develop over a few slides.
2. Nice vertical imagery that can be zoomed and cropped.
3. Optional: A “controversial” topic
How to Use Instagram to Quiz your Users

Example: Once Instagram released the poll feature we brainstormed new ways to use it. After talking with a few curators, we decided on trying a quiz. We put together 5 questions and use the poll feature to allow users to guess the correct answer. Our last slide listed all of the correct answers. Afterwards, we received tons of direct messages from users saying how fun it was and asking for more. **Additional features:** A/B poll. **Time required:** 2-3 hours spent collecting and vetting questions, finding images, cropping images, and publishing the quiz. **Additional advice:** Know your audience and their skill level or expertise. Don’t make your quiz too niche.

What you’ll need:
1. A handful of moderately difficult questions covering a specific subject (ex. Art History)
2. A curatorial collaborator who can help create challenging questions or help vetting for accuracy.
How to Use Instagram to Help Visitors Plan Their Week

Example: Like many museums, the Getty has many exhibitions and events each week. To combat this, we decided to pick 3 things to focus on. We would link directly to exhibition pages or ticket information via the swipe up feature, and provide a summary at the end for screenshot purposes. Additional features: “Link in bio” or Swipe up. Time required: 2-3 hours spent on deciding what to feature each week, cropping images, finding links to more information, and publishing to Instagram. Additional advice: We tried to make this into a video a few times, but users didn’t find that as helpful.

What you’ll need:
1. A trusty calendar with prioritized exhibitions and events
2. Many vertical images with ample white space
How to Use Instagram to Create Interactive Q+A

Example: There are a million ways to do a Q+A on social media, but an Instagram Q+A is one of the easiest. In the past, to pull one off, we’ve spent an hour meeting with content experts to plan and take photos. Then we would post a call for questions on Instagram and leave about a week for people to find the post. We would also cross promote on other platforms. As questions came in we would place them in a google document and share with the content experts ahead of time. When it’s time to answer the inquiries, we spend about an hour with the experts and answer each question (applying some humor when applicable). Done! Time required: 2-3 hours of time planning and answering questions and taking photos. Additional advice: Make sure to leave enough time for your followers to leave questions, and make sure to make some extra time for any additional last-minute questions.

What you’ll need:
1. A topic that people are genuinely curious about. (ex. Medieval life)
2. 1 or 2 enthusiastic and friendly content experts
3. 2 people running social media to help answer questions.
How to Use Instagram to Create a Show

Example: When Twitter announced a live video platform, periscope, the Getty team decided to try out a weekly show. Our show was called “Literally Anything” where viewers were encouraged to ask anything they wanted about a single artwork for 5 minutes. We had a solid format that was perfected every week, and we kept a consistent schedule and time. We had a fantastic and charismatic host who drew people in week by week. Sadly, our host went to get his PhD, so the show was put on hiatus. Because this process was easily translated for Instagram story, we worked with our intern last year to launch his own show involving tours of the Getty’s campus. Since this was a story we story boarded our ideas and created a script for each slide. This second version of a show was very well received. Other institutions, like @Globeandmail, have weekly shows. The Globe and Mail account has a weekly cooking show featuring one of their food editors the same time every Wednesday night. **Time required:** 2-3 hours weekly spent researching topics, storyboarding, figuring out logistics, promotion, filming, and publishing.

**What you’ll need:**
1. Consistency
2. Charismatic host (improv background helps!)
3. A repeatable format
4. iPhone gimbal
5. Time to do multiple dry runs
6. Flexibility to iterate week by week
How to Use Instagram to Decide What to Post on Instagram

Example: Luckily, at the Getty, we have a larger collection. But with that quantity, comes some decision making. If you’re struggling to decide what to post, ask your users! The slider poll feature is up for 24 hours, and users get to vote for what they prefer. After the decision is made, you, as the content creator, get to give the people what they want.

Additional features: Slider. Time required: 5 minutes spent setting up your slider poll. More time spent creating content after a decision is made. Additional advice: The slider feature is good if you’re deciding between more than 2 options. The poll feature can help decide between just 2.

What you’ll need:
1. Fun options for future content
How to Use Instagram to Ask for Feedback

Example: Your visitors often have questions before or after their visit. As employees, we have a hard time seeing things from a visitor’s perspective so it’s always good to ask. At the Getty, we tried out a series called “Quest Fest” where we went into the galleries and asked visitors what they were questioning. Some of these questions were simple, and some were more complex and required experts to answer in the form of a blog or social post, but all of the questions were interesting and provided fuel for future content. With the Instagram question feature, this process has become even easier. Additional features: The “Ask a Question” button. Time required: 1-2 hours spent collecting answering questions. More time required if you use the feedback for a larger series.

What you’ll need:
1. Inquiring visitors

Instagram or Instagram Story
How to Use Instagram to Learn When to Pivot Strategies

Example: For a while we tested out a series on Instagram stories. I noticed our engagement was dropping off week by week, so I decided to ask our users about the series. I asked, “Was this Useful?” using the poll feature. It turns out that a majority of users said no, so we regrouped and pivoted the series in a new direction. Golden Rule: Listen to your users! Additional features: A/B poll. Time required: 5 mins spent posting a question.

What you’ll need:
1. Something you want feedback on
2. Willingness to change course