

# Why Hashtags Are Crucial for Social Media Success

Content moves at lightning speed in the ever-evolving world of social media, but hashtags still reign supreme as a tool for discovery and engagement. These little pound symbols (#) followed by relevant keywords are more than just a fad—they're a strategic necessity for anyone who wants their business voice to be heard. Why are these hashtags so important?

## ***Expand Your Reach: From In-Person to Around the Globe***

Because social media platforms are flooded with content daily, hashtags act like filters, sifting through the 'noise' and exposing your content to your specific audience.

You add searchable labels to your posts by including relevant hashtags. People interested in these topics can discover your content, even if they don't follow you directly.

Using a # with your business name and #earlyowego will allow current and future customers to find your location more quickly and interest them in visiting your little corner of curated items.

## ***Build Communities and Join Conversations***

Hashtags are powerful conversation starters. They connect you with people who share your interests, fostering a sense of community.

Let's say you're passionate about antiques specifically from the Art Nouveau era. Using the hashtag #artnouveauantiques allows you to engage in discussions, share ideas, and participate in a movement larger than your knowledge and offerings. Hashtags can even help you discover influencers and thought leaders in your niche, opening doors for collaboration, and additional insight.

## ***Boost Engagement: Getting Likes, Shares, and More***

The whole idea of using social media for your small business is to engage potential customers who would not have otherwise found you in person and have them interact with your content via liking, sharing, and commenting on your posts. Hashtags can significantly increase the engagement your posts receive. People who discover your content through hashtags are more inclined to like, comment, and share it with their followers. This organic reach can snowball, exposing your content to an even wider audience.

Studies have shown that posts with one or two relevant hashtags receive significantly higher engagement than those without. The key is finding the right balance – too many hashtags can overwhelm your audience and dilute your message. (See below for specific hashtag tips.)

## ***Promote Brand Awareness: Making a Name for Yourself***

For small businesses, hashtags are a goldmine for brand awareness. Use targeted hashtags related to your industry or product to establish yourself as a thought leader in your niche.

Imagine your booth using your branded hashtag, the #earlyowego hashtag, and additional niche hashtags such as #1950sbaseballcards, #earlybarbie, or #victorianwickerfurniture. Anyone searching for one of these categories might discover your social media account and become a loyal customer.

## ***The Art of the Hashtag: Using Them Wisely***

Hashtags, while powerful, require a strategic approach. Here are some tips to maximize their effectiveness:

- **Research is Vital:** Log onto your social media accounts and search by hashtag to identify ones that are relevant to your content, target audience, genre, and locale. Look for hashtags with a good balance of popularity and reach. (A good general rule of thumb- if it has <100 or >1 million usages, it's not going to help.)
- **Don't overdo it:** Stick to a handful of relevant hashtags (typically 5-10) to avoid overwhelming your audience. A few of these may change from post to post, but a few of these should be used for every piece of content you create.
- **Track and analyze:** Monitor which hashtags resonate best with your audience and adjust your strategy accordingly.

Here are some hashtags Early Owego uses:

- #owego (Historic Owego Marketplace's hashtag)
- #owegony (city's hashtag)
- #owegoantiques (seems to catch many folks looking for antiques in Owego)
- #experiencetioga (county's tourism hashtag)
- #TiogaAntiquesTrail (promoting the county's antiques trail, which includes Early Owego)
- #ExploreFingerLakes (Finger Lakes Tourism's hashtag)
- #MyFLX (My Finger Lakes Wine Country's hashtag)
- #SouthernTier
- #UpstateNY
- #nepa (North Eastern Pennsylvania- we're close enough they'll cross the line!)
- #weloveny
- #antiquesandcollectibles, #antiquing or #antiquingadventures
- #vintagehome, #vintagefashion, #collecting, #shelfie, #shopsmall, #buysecondhand

By understanding the importance of hashtags as major search filtering tools and wielding them strategically throughout your online content, you can unlock a world of

possibilities on social media. So start expanding your reach and building a brand by defining your hashtags, and let's #getit!