

Getting Started with Instagram

Your quick-reference guide to building confidence, clarity, and consistency online

By Tannis Miller (Tannis Miller Creative Studios)

Visuals are the first thing people notice about your brand. Good design isn't just about looking pretty, it's about grabbing attention, telling your story, and moving people to take action. You don't need to be a designer to create great marketing visuals.

With Canva and a few simple design principles, you can make graphics that look professional, connect with your audience, and actually help your business grow.

Set up your profile for success

- Switch to a Business or Creator account (Settings, Account, Switch to Professional)
- Use a clear, recognizable profile photo
- Write a bio that says who you help, what you do, and what to do next
- Example: "Helping travellers find the best eats & stays in Saskatchewan | Saskatoon | Explore more"
- Add a link in bio tool (Linktree, Later, or your website)
- Make sure contact buttons (Call / Email / Directions) are active

Create your content pillars

Your pillars are your repeatable themes — the backbone of your content strategy.

- Tourism: Hidden gems | Local experiences | Tips | Behind the scenes
- Restaurant: Seasonal menu | Team stories | Customer highlights | Local collabs

Choose 3–4 pillars and stick with them for 30 days.

Plan your posting rhythm

Start small and stay consistent.

- Feed posts: 2–3 per week
- Stories: A few times per week
- Reels: 1–2 per month
- Engage with others daily (5–10 minutes is plenty!)

Quick schedule example:

- Mon - Tip or highlight
- Wed - Product or service
- Fri - Behind the scenes

Hashtags & engagement

- Use hashtags to help new people find you:
- 5 industry hashtags (#ExploreSask, #TravelSask)
- 5 local hashtags (#YXE, #ShopLocalSask)
- 5 community/niche tags (#SupportLocal, #WomenInBiz)

Engagement checklist:

- Reply to all DMs & comments
- Comment on 5+ posts/day
- Follow & interact with local partners
- Share user-generated content



Fill your grid intentionally

Think of your first 9 posts as your storefront.

Show a mix of:

- Introduction or welcome
- Product/service
- Behind the scenes
- Testimonial or review
- Local collaboration
- Tip or FAQ
- Team moment
- Event or milestone
- Call to action

Pro tip: Perfection is overrated... authenticity always wins!

Bonus: Your 30-day checklist

- Posted twice this week
- Used Stories
- Engaged with other accounts
- Replied to all comments
- Learned something new about my audience

Keep showing up. Keep learning. Keep connecting.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tannis Miller is your go-to social media strategist if you're ready to stop winging it online and actually start getting results. With more than a decade of experience in marketing and communications, she's worked across events, home development, and economic development before launching her own agency, Tannis Miller Creative Studios, in 2021.

Her team now partners with lifestyle, hospitality, tourism, and beauty brands across Canada and beyond, creating content that looks good and converts. Tannis has a diploma in Creative Communications (Public Relations) and a B.A. in Psychology, giving her a mix of creative strategy and people-focused insight.

Known for her straight-talking but fun teaching style, she's led workshops for organizations like Vendasta, Discover Saskatoon, and Downtown Saskatoon BID. She's also trained professional teams—from physiotherapists to hospitality managers—on how to use social media with confidence so their businesses (and personal brands) shine.

