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# The Role of Instagram in Building Journalist's Personal Brand: An Analysis of Communication Strategies in Social Media

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Instagram, journalist, social media, communication, personal brand

## ABSTRACT

Instagram has become one of the most important tools for building a personal brand, especially for journalists. The aim of this article is to examine the role of this platform in shaping the image of journalists and to analyze the communication strategies they use to leverage social media effectively. The paper discusses how journalists build their professional identity, engage audiences, and promote values and content through Instagram. The study covers both the visual and textual aspects of posts and interactions with followers, which are a key element in building the authenticity of a personal brand. The article highlights how Instagram enables journalists to stand out from the competition and influences their work's perceived credibility and professionalism.

## Introduction

In the age of digital media and the growing popularity of social media platforms, Instagram has become a key tool in building a personal brand, not only for celebrities or influencers but also for professionals, including journalists. With its visual capabilities and interactive features, Instagram offers journalists a platform to shape their image, connect with their audience, and promote their work. Unlike traditional media, social media allows for direct and more personal interaction with audiences, which can influence trust and viewer loyalty.

The aim of this article is to analyze the role of Instagram in building journalists' personal brands, with particular emphasis on the communication strategies they employ on this platform. The study will examine how journalists use Instagram to create their professional identity, what communication techniques they use in their interactions with audiences, and what challenges and opportunities social media presence presents in the context of journalistic work. The article will attempt to answer two research questions: How do journalists use Instagram to build their personal brand? What communication strategies are employed? The paper will analyze both communication practices and the potential impact of these actions on building relationships with audiences and trust in the information being conveyed.

## The personal brand of journalists

*A personal brand is everything that others say about us when we're not in the room.*

- Jeff Bezos.

There are various definitions of the concept of a

brand. J. Altkorn, in *Brand Strategy*, emphasizes its multidimensional character. A brand can be understood as a product designation, a trademark, the company's image in the eyes of the consumer, or as a tool for communicating benefits that are important to the customer (Altkorn, 1999).

Personal branding in the profession of journalism is a collection of traits, values, and images that define a professional in the eyes of the audience. It is the process of consciously creating and managing one's reputation, including professional and personal actions. It plays a key role in journalism, allowing one to stand out in the competitive media market, build audience trust and loyalty, and increase public influence. A contemporary journalist with a strong personal brand becomes an expert and a media personality whose opinions and actions significantly impact public opinion (Chimkowska, 2022).

Traditional methods of building a journalist's reputation, such as publications in reputable newspapers, books, or appearances on television, were primarily based on recognition within the professional community and media institutions. However, new media, including social media, offer journalists direct contact with their audience, allowing them to create their image and respond quickly to events independently. Platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn enable personal brand building, community engagement, and direct interaction with the public, which was much more limited in traditional media.

## The profession of journalism in contemporary times

The Great Dictionary of the Polish Language [Wielki

słownik języka polskiego] defines the word profession as a set of tasks and activities performed by a person to earn a living, requiring specific knowledge and skills that are acquired through education, training, and practical exercises. A journalist can take on various roles depending on the context – from a reporter covering events on-site to an editor crafting content to a commentator or columnist interpreting events in a broader social, political, or cultural context.

In the dynamic world of contemporary media, the definition of journalism constantly evolves, reflecting technological, social, and cultural changes. Today, it encompasses both traditional forms of journalism as well as new areas, such as citizen journalism, data journalism, and multimedia storytelling (Brodzińska, 2015).

Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms, primarily based on visual communication, allowing users to post photos, videos, and stories. Instagram's algorithms promote content that generates high engagement, such as likes, comments, and shares, making it crucial for journalists to tailor their posts to the expectations of their audience. The platform offers various formats, such as posts, reels, and stories, allowing diverse content presentation – from short, dynamic videos to long-form posts (Frier, 2020).

The specificity of visual communication on Instagram is of great importance for journalists, as it enables the quick and effective transmission of information. Visual elements, such as photos, graphics, and infographics, make it easier to reach a wide audience, especially in an era of increasing visual content consumption. Instagram allows journalists to interact directly with their audience,

which is crucial for building a personal brand and maintaining an engaged community (Stopczyńska, 2021).

Social media, including Instagram, have become integral to journalism, offering journalists new opportunities to reach their audience and respond to current events. However, using this platform comes with challenges, such as the polarization of opinions, the increasing number of fake news, and the pressure to maintain a positive image. Journalists must face the responsibility of ensuring the accuracy of the information they convey while balancing the demands of algorithms with the expectations of their audience (Żukowski, 2024).

## Research methodology

The research methodology presented in this article is based on content analysis, aiming to examine the role of Instagram in the process of personal branding among journalists. Particular attention is paid to how this platform is utilized for self-promotion and interaction with audiences. The analysis focuses on content published on Instagram, such as posts and photographs, to reveal communication strategies and tools employed by journalists in shaping their public image.

The scope of the study encompasses journalists who actively use Instagram for self-promotion and professional purposes, representing a wide range of journalistic genres. The selection criteria include journalists engaged in various fields and with significant reach, such as Martyna Wojciechowska, Tomasz Kammel and Grażyna Plebanek.

### Figure 1:

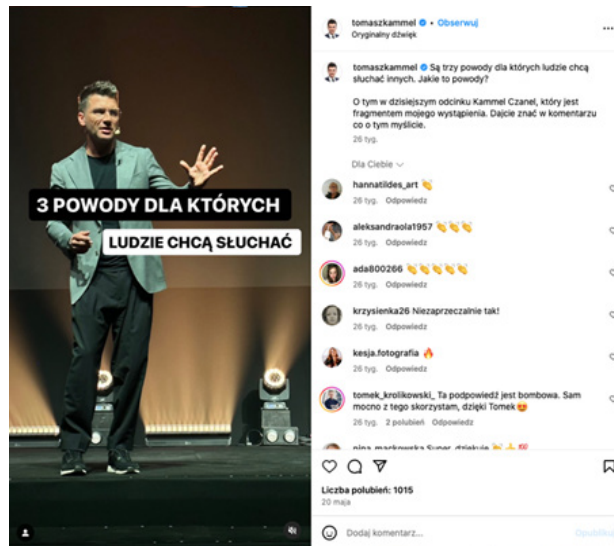
*An Instagram post by Martyna Wojciechowska portrays the journalist promoting the free preventive program Młode Głowy (Young Minds).*



Martyna Wojciechowska is a Polish TV presenter, journalist, traveller, writer, and social activist. She has received numerous awards for her reporting and journalism and gained widespread popularity as the host of the *Woman at the Edge of the World* program. Wojciechowska is active on Instagram, where 2.2 million people follow her account. She has published 4,812 posts, with content primarily focusing on lifestyle, travel, culture, and social issues such as gender equality and tolerance. Wojciechowska builds her personal brand on Instagram by emphasizing her views on social topics like gender equality and tolerance. Her authenticity and directness attract a loyal following. She shares content related to literature, culture, and inspiring quotes while engaging with her followers' comments.

### Figure 2:

*An Instagram post by Martyna Wojciechowska portrays the journalist promoting the free preventive program *Młode Głowy* (Young Minds).*



Tomasz Kammel is known as an experienced TV presenter, journalist, and master of ceremonies. On his social media, he expands his activities to include educational content, primarily focused on communication, self-presentation, and public speaking. His Instagram profile boasts 360,000 followers. The presenter runs an educational series called *Kammel Czanel* on YouTube, where he explains communication principles and demonstrates practical techniques, such as overcoming stage fright, in an accessible and humorous way.

On Instagram, he shares stories and posts in which he answers viewers' questions and provides glimpses into his daily work on television and during workshops. This allows him to maintain regular contact with his fans and audience. On social media, he posts motivational content emphasizing the importance of personal development, supports his

An example of her social involvement is her promoting reading and support for social initiatives, such as the march against violence titled *Her Name Was Liza #StopRape* and the *Unaweza* Foundation, which aids individuals experiencing mental health crises. An Instagram post by Martyna Wojciechowska portrays the journalist promoting the free preventive program *Młode Głowy* (Young Minds). The post highlights Wojciechowska's engagement in social initiatives, showcasing her role as a public figure advocating for critical societal issues, thereby reinforcing her personal brand as socially responsible and committed to community well-being (Instagram profile of Martyna Wojciechowska).

followers, and encourages them to take action and share their successes. In the post, Tomasz Kammel is shown conducting a training session titled *3 Reasons Why People Want to Listen*. Such posts reinforce his personal brand on Instagram by showcasing his expertise in communication and public speaking. By sharing educational and practical content, Kammel positions himself as a knowledgeable and credible professional, engaging his audience and building trust through valuable insights.

Tomasz Kammel builds his brand on Instagram by regularly sharing knowledge and experience gained as a presenter and communication coach. Kammel strengthens his image as an expert in these areas by posting content related to topics discussed in his YouTube videos, such as effective communication and self-presentation. Additionally, by engaging with his followers, responding to their questions, and



to present themselves not only in a professional context but also on a personal level. Journalists who share personal aspects of their lives, such as photos with family, hobbies, or everyday situations, become more accessible and closer to their audience. Such posts can build a bond based on trust, which is the foundation of a strong personal brand. Interactions with the audience – responding to comments, private messages, and organizing Q&A sessions – allow journalists to connect with their fans, fostering a sense of community and authenticity (Niedźwiedziński, [2016](#)).

Engaging the community is an essential element of effective communication on Instagram. Journalists who regularly engage with their audience increase the engagement and reach of their content. Using tools like polls, comments, quizzes, or questions allows for direct interaction with the audience, boosting their engagement and providing valuable feedback that can be useful in future content production. Additionally, such actions can help maintain audience loyalty, as followers feel acknowledged and appreciated by their favorite journalists (Popiołek, [2015](#)).

Personalizing content is another crucial element in building a personal brand. Journalists who tailor their posts to the expectations and needs of their community gain greater trust and loyalty from their audience. Responding to individual comments and posting content that references previous conversations or fan inquiries helps create a more intimate and personal relationship. These actions promote the development of a long-term bond with the audience, which is essential for maintaining a strong and stable personal brand.

Instagram also serves as an important tool in managing reputation crises. The speed and reach of the platform mean that any controversy or criticism can quickly gain widespread attention, and how a journalist responds to such situations is crucial for maintaining a positive image. Journalists who know how to properly address criticism demonstrate transparency and responsibility, which helps minimize the negative effects of a crisis. In controversial situations, responses should be thoughtful, substantive, and unemotional, allowing the journalist to maintain professionalism and credibility (Roguski, [2020](#)).

Transparency in communication on Instagram is crucial, especially in crisis situations. Audiences expect journalists to be honest, reliable, and responsible. Journalists who are transparent in their posts and interactions build trust within their community. In the case of reputation crises,

transparency in communication, quick responses, and a willingness to clarify the situation is key to rebuilding reputation. These attitudes allow journalists to maintain authenticity and credibility, which are the foundation of their success on social media platforms (Stawarz, [2017](#)).

With its visual format and ability to interact with the audience, Instagram has become one of the most important tools in building journalists' personal brands. It allows for professional content presentation and creates an image of an authentic, accessible, and engaged individual. Engaging the community, personalizing content, and responsibly managing reputation crises are key elements of effectively using this platform in the context of journalistic work (Skwarek, [2023](#)).

### **Challenges and limitations of using Instagram by journalists**

Using Instagram by journalists comes with several challenges and limitations that can impact their professionalism and image. One of the main issues is finding the right balance between professionalism and privacy. Instagram, as a social media platform, encourages the sharing of both professional and personal content. Journalists who engage on this platform must consider how much of their private life they are comfortable sharing with their audience. On the one hand, showcasing personal aspects can increase authenticity and community engagement, but on the other hand, it may lead to breaches of privacy, which, in the long run, could affect the journalist's image and professionalism.

This issue is also linked to the risk of crossing the boundaries of intimacy. Posting overly personal content, such as details about family life, emotional experiences, or controversial opinions, can spark controversy and lead to a loss of trust among the audience. Journalists who overly engage with their privacy on Instagram may be accused of excessively exposing their personal lives, which could undermine their authority in the eyes of the public. In such cases, it becomes difficult to maintain a balanced boundary between what is acceptable regarding self-promotion and what might be perceived as crossing the line of privacy.

Journalists also face ethical dilemmas related to self-promotion. Social media platforms like Instagram place professionals under constant pressure to promote themselves, which can conflict with the principles of objectivity and journalistic integrity. In their pursuit of increasing reach and popularity,

journalists may feel the pressure to create more engaging but less substantive content, which can lead to manipulation or misinformation. These difficulties related to self-promotion are particularly problematic in journalism, where the primary responsibility is to deliver reliable and credible information .

Another significant issue is the pressure created by algorithms and metrics, which determine which content gets promoted and which gets pushed to the margins. Like any social media platform, Instagram operates based on algorithms that favor content with high engagement, meaning posts that generate many likes, comments, and shares. In an effort to maintain high visibility and reach, journalists may feel pressured to tailor their content to meet the algorithm's expectations, which may not always align with their editorial intentions. Pursuing a large number of followers and reach can lead to superficial content that does not necessarily address the audience's informational needs .

This also comes with the risk of the negative impact of comparison with other users. In the world of social media, where everyone has access to information about follower counts, likes, and reach, journalists may feel pressure to compare their success with the achievements of others, which can lead to feelings of inadequacy or frustration. Such comparisons can discourage creativity, cause stress, and affect how journalists present their content, as they may focus more on aligning with prevailing trends rather than concentrating on the substantive value of their posts (Ciamciara, [2010](#)).

The issue of disinformation is a significant concern on Instagram. With the rising number of fake news, journalists must be particularly cautious when sharing visual content that can be easily manipulated or taken out of context. Photos and videos on Instagram can be used to spread disinformation, and editing or manipulating them has become increasingly common. Journalists must be aware of these risks and make every effort to avoid falling into the traps of disinformation. It is essential to verify the sources of content before publishing and ensure that the information is accurate and fact-based. Otherwise, there is a risk that the journalist could unknowingly participate in disseminating fake news, which would undermine their credibility .

The challenges journalists face when using Instagram are complex and require a mindful approach to privacy, ethics, and responsibility for shared content. In the face of growing competition for audience attention and pressure from algorithms, journalists must balance self-promotion with

maintaining accuracy and professionalism. It is important to avoid the pitfalls of disinformation and comparisons with other users while striving to maintain authenticity and responsibility in communication on the platform.

## Conclusions

Instagram plays a significant role in building journalists' brands, offering them a platform to publish professional and personal content. With its visual format and interactive features such as stories, comments, and polls, it not only allows for showcasing effective journalistic work but also for building authentic relationships with the audience. The platform helps increase reach, engage the community, and shape the image of the journalist as an accessible and open individual. A key strategy is using Instagram to present oneself as a professional while maintaining authenticity and engaging in interactions with followers, which allows for building a loyal and engaged community.

Journalists should implement several proven strategies and best practices to effectively use Instagram in the context of building a personal brand. First, regularly publishing work-related content, such as behind-the-scenes material or analyses of current events, is important, as it helps build credibility. Second, authenticity and transparency in interactions with the audience are essential for maintaining a positive image. Journalists who share their professional achievements and personal moments create a bond based on trust and closeness. Interactions with the audience, such as responding to comments, organizing Q&A sessions, or engaging in discussions, help create a dynamic community that contributes to further developing a personal brand.

From an ethical perspective, journalists should ensure a balance between self-promotion and responsibility for their content. The need to engage the audience and tailor content to the expectations of algorithms should not lead to neglecting professionalism or substance. Ethical use of Instagram also involves a responsible approach to disinformation – journalists should avoid spreading unverified information and always seek to verify sources before publishing any content.

Recommendations for journalists are also concerned with maintaining a proper balance between professionalism and privacy. While sharing personal moments can help build authenticity, it is important to avoid excessive disclosure of information that could harm both private life and professional reputation.

It is crucial to understand the boundaries between these two spheres and consciously manage the content being published. In terms of future research, it is worth focusing on analyzing other social media platforms, such as TikTok or Twitter, which are gaining importance in journalists' communication strategies.

Studying the differences in approaches to self-promotion on these platforms could provide valuable insights into adapting strategies depending on the medium's specifics. An interesting area of study is also comparing the strategies of journalists from different countries, which may vary depending on local cultural, political, or media conditions. Such analyses would allow for a better understanding of global trends in personal brand building among journalists and the application of best practices in various contexts.

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