

Instagram Workshop Preliminary Reading

Before we launch into some points about Instagram it's first important to have a basic understanding of how social media marketing should work (as opposed to what you'll see happening by many misguided businesses).

The fundamentals of social media:

- **Business vs personal use.** It's important as a business to remember why users login to their social media platforms, on the whole we don't login in thinking 'what's the latest ad that's going to be served to me' nor 'what new product discount does my favourite brand have'? Users generally login to be entertained, distracted, to connect, to learn something new, be inspired etc. NOT be sold to.
- **Stop selling.** To be successful on social media businesses must therefore change their mindset and stop selling and broadcasting and focus on human to human, meaningful connections and establishing and developing true valuable relationships.
- **Engagement is key.** Constantly broadcasting your promotion and sales etc will not do you any favours whereas focusing on valuable engagement which builds relationships will. Engagement is also not just a matter of 'quantity' (i.e. 100 likes) but of quality (like so much in social media). For instance a competition which garners 100 likes and 200 comments because they are a prerequisite for entry might look impressive but the actual value in a post which elicits comments that help you as a business in some way are far more meaningful.
- **Make friends.** Treat your social media accounts as if you were trying a person to make friends not a business trying to make money.
- **Create and join communities.** An online community works just like a circle of friends and business associates in real life and can be hugely rewarding. Create this by having conversations, involving them, asking questions, caring about them, remembering the small things (like birthdays), promoting and helping others. This will be reciprocated in time. Social media and 'real life' are not 2 separate entities, social media is much like good old fashioned networking.
- **Be proactive.** You cannot expect masses of engagement if you're not prepared to engage yourself. Spend more time on other people's profiles than your own, instigate conversations and build relationships.
- **Know your audience.** If you don't you're shooting in the dark with your content and your efforts to connect with them proactively. The more you understand and are familiar with your audience the more you'll be able to work out what, when and how to post your content.

2019 Is All About Human Centric Marketing:

- **Rebuilding trust.** With data scandals, the rise of messenger bots and big influencer issues we are in a time when there is a massive lack of trust around the ads we are served and the messages brands send us. Word of mouth recommendations (both on and offline) from family, friends and the communities tend to be the most trusted source right now. Your business needs to be part of and build a close network. Showing the real humans and sharing business stories and experiences helps build a business that's relatable and trustworthy with a real human element. Remember people buy from people.
- **Telling your brand story.** A highly powerful marketing strategy any business can utilise which touches on emotions to motivate action. Providing 'snackable' snippets of why you exist and how and why you do what you do helps you attract the right customers, the ones who share your values, empathise with you thoughts and journey and who will actually use your product/service because of who you are. Bring your brand to life.
- **In the moment content.** Personal, authentic and in the moment content is the trend right now over produced and pre-packed content. Just look at the rising popularity of Stories. This doesn't mean the perfect Instagram grid is redundant just that you need to use it intentionally and with thought.

The fundamentals of Instagram:

- **Visual appeal.** We retain visual content better than words, our brain loves visual content and can absorb and synthesise it far more effectively. People retain 20% of what they read, 10% of what they hear, but 80% of what they see. In fact, it takes 13 milliseconds to process an image and 100 milliseconds to attach meaning to it.
- **Instagram is all about community.** Connecting with your community, finding your tribe, whatever you want to call it Instagram was set up to be a place to find people with similar interests and passions and this is still very much at its core. If you focus on real interactions, getting to know other people in the same space, building relationships, and having conversations that's where you'll create a community vested in your business and your brand. Interaction is easy and varied (likes, comments, DMs, Stories) and people are there to engage and they do.
- **Sustained user growth.** There's currently 1 billion monthly active users and usage doubled between 2016 to 2018. Investing your time in a platform that's continuing to grow makes sense.
- **Instagram Stories are the future.** Their ephemeral nature (they disappear after 24 hours) makes them enticing, drawing on our FOMO. Fun and unpolished, they are a simple, quick and effective way to produce content of value which connects with your audience on a different level to the main feed. With lots of inbuilt engagement tools, if you're not using Stories you're really missing out a huge chunk of potential for your business. Stories are set to surpass the feed in popularity this year.