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8 Best Practices for Creating Social Media Images

The better your posts perform, the more impressions/clicks/reactions you'll earn, it's a great way to build brand awareness, reach new customers and make new connections.

How can you increase your brand awareness?

Strong imagery is a critical component of a strong engagement strategy. Start by increasing the engagement rate of your posts…

1) Ensure the image is clear

Might seem like common sense, but if you want to engage with your audience through a social media platform, be sure your image is in-focus. Bad crop jobs, weird angles, and fuzzy pictures are sure signs that your brand isn't investing in its social media or brand presence. Which your audience will interpret as not being invested in them.

2) Use strong photography

What is strong photography? It sounds cliche, but strong photography is something you know when you see it. It's imagery that evokes a reaction from the viewer. Imagery that rises above the clutter of your audience's current social media platforms.

This could mean:

- Epic landscape shots
- Fantastical aspirational images (luxury goods)
- Humour

- Compositionally interesting photographs

This also means avoiding common stock photo troupes. You don't need to be a professional to get great shots of your location, event, boats, team or products.

3) Incorporate video

Imagery doesn't always mean photography. Look for ways to incorporate video as the image component. Why? Because video can produce 12x more shares than text and image-based posts combined.

If you think this means we're asking you to hire actors or to invest in significant video editing software, reframe your expectations. Even a 10-20 second reel, short video for Instagram stories or boomerang video can be enough to draw a user in and drive engagement.

4) Use imagery to communicate the underlying essence of your brand

When selecting your imagery, most brands opt for photographs that relate directly to the content being shared. This strategy can be effective, especially if you're trying to draw attention to a specific feature of a product/service offering within your content. But, it can get a little stale over time.

Instead of choosing imagery that could come across as being "on the nose", consider selecting photos and videos that communicate the underlying emotional essence of the content being shared. Use your imagery to communicate how you want some to *feel* after reading your content. Not always what that content is specifically about.

6) Get the mechanics right

With so much more content in the ether, your audience has become a bit of an expert on what makes a "good" social media image. Images that don't meet their ever-increasing standards don't receive the same level of engagement and visibility as those that get the basics right. So, what are these high-brow expectations?

1. Good lighting – Don't rely on overhead lighting and muted sunlight to light your image. Use ring lights and other auxiliary lighting tools when able.

2. Get everything in focus – Clean your camera lens and ensure your image is in focus before posting.
3. Don't zoom – When able, move closer to your subject or crop afterwards rather than zooming into your target.
4. Learn the **Rule of Thirds** – Use the rule of thirds to create interesting shots. What is the rule of thirds, you ask? In a nutshell, you'll create a compositional grid that splits the image into nine pieces and four gridlines. Frame the most critical aspects of the image along those gridlines to create attention-grabbing works of art.

7) Size your image to the platform

Vertical. Horizontal. 1080×1080. 1200×628. 1080×1920. Sizing matters…

Your audience actively chooses their social media experience. Whether it's stories, posts, reels, shorts, or good-ol'-fashion tweets, the best engagement is earned by the social media imagery sized appropriately to the channel they are being served on.

While this does create additional work for social media creatives (resizing every image to 4 or 5 different specs), the resulting images are more powerful and are more likely to generate an ROI on your labor investment.

8) Mix up your image topics

If your social presence only consists of one specific type of photo topic (say, product shots, for example), it's going to be tricky for you to build a brand. You need to work to keep your audience engaged over time, and variety can be a powerful tool in maintaining interest. Incorporate a mix of image topics into your social media.

These can include:

- Product Images
- Team Shots
- Behind-the-Scenes Peaks
- Brand Announcements
- Comparison Images
- Testimonial/Review Blocks
- User-Generated Content (learn more about the magic of user-generated content)

Up your social media game

Strong ROI comes from strong engagement. The more shares, comments, likes, and impressions your content receives the greater your earned media value. If you want to increase your advocacy marketing program's earned media value, start by taking a look at the imagery you're utilising and look for opportunities to test and improve.

Our top photography tips:

1. Relate a story with your Picture
2. Unique perspectives invite the viewer into the Image
3. Understand how composition impacts your photos (rule of thirds)
4. Capture the allure of symmetry, details or texture
5. Use reflections to capture attention
6. Shoot repeating patterns to catch the eye
7. Be unconventional