



Business Improvement Area
SOCIAL MEDIA HANDBOOK

ART CENTRE



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THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL MARKETING

TIMES HAVE CHANGED.

The Internet and social media are now a huge part of daily life for most Canadians. Canadians are now checking social media while eating breakfast, during break at work, and before bed.

Consumers are now reading online reviews before visiting restaurants, instead of searching through a phone book. The information that consumers find online have a very large influence on the decisions they make, and more important, the items that they purchase.

Therefore, an active digital media presence is **essential** when introducing new customers to your business, along with keeping your current ones.

Many of you may be thinking, "we already know that social media and the Internet is important to business", but do you know how to maximize the benefits of your social media accounts and how to strategically market your business as a destination of choice?

Anyone can create social media accounts and post. However, posting randomly to have a social media presence doesn't ensure sales or convert followers into dedicated supporters of your business.

The real magic happens when you follow a **strategy**, establish a **brand**, and use social media as a tool for **storytelling**.



Ask Yourself These Questions First.

Before you begin to develop your social media strategy, you need a solid understanding of what you want to accomplish.

Ask yourself: **What are you trying to accomplish?** Do you want to increase sales? Improve your brand recognition? Build a positive reputation? Attract more customers?

Once you know the answers to these questions, you can then decide who you are trying to reach (your target market).

Your target market is a very specific audience that your business wants to engage with. If you operate a ladies fashion boutique, your target audience might be women aged 30-50 with high disposable income with professions that require them to wear business casual attire.

The more specific you can make your target audience, the more **effective** your marketing will be.

Take time to conduct market research so that you can identify:

- Who makes up your target audience?
- Where can you find these people?
- What do they value?
- What are they worried about/ what problems do they have?
- What problems can you help them solve?
- What do they need right now?



Let's Talk About Messaging.

Once you have established the answers to these questions, you can start focusing all of your messaging to this particular audience. It is important that you identify your target audience's problems, along with the **solutions** that you as a business can provide to them.

Filling a need or providing a solution to a problem that your target audience has is essential and will help your business achieve success.

Start With Why

You should take a moment to think about why you started your business in the first place, beyond making a profit. Identify what pushed you to open your specific business, what your passions are, along with how you want to inspire your clients.

Keep these answers in mind every time you write a caption for a social media post or run a special promotion.

Show your customers that you have passion and that your business exists for more reasons than just making a profit. Show them how you want to improve their life or make an **impact** in the world. For example, the brand Aerie not only sells women's lingerie and sleepwear, they work towards increasing body positivity and raising the self esteem of their clients. Their messaging shows that they care about their clients and want them to be comfortable in their own skin. You can buy pyjamas just about anywhere, but not every business is helping you to raise your self esteem.



Show, Don't Tell.

Many businesses make the mistake of using social media simply to tell followers to drop by. Although this might entice some customers, it is not the most effective means to attracting visitors.

Showing followers what to expect when they visit your business, showcasing what makes you unique, and telling the **stories** about the people who bring your business to life is much more effective.

People want to know why they should visit you and what makes you unique. They want to see the personalities behind the people they will meet when they walk in the door and how your product or service is going to **improve** their life.

Experiences Over Everything.

In the past, it may have been enough to carry a large inventory in your business. That alone may have drawn in a large amount of clients, but the world is changing. Customers now have more options to choose from and in order to set yourself apart, you must go the extra mile.

Right now, many small businesses are finding it very effective to offer more than just a retail line; they also offer an **experience**. This could be anything from a cooking class, workshop, fashion show, pop-up vendors inside your business on special occasions, live music, or selfie opportunities. **The sky is truly the limit.**

Not only do these experiences give people another reason to walk through your door, it gives you the opportunity to set yourself apart and provide something that the customer cannot get at the mall or big box stores.



Best Practices.

Gear Your Content to the Platform

- Facebook is ideal for events, promotions, and sharing stories
- Twitter is ideal for quick updates and is news based- journalists are very active on this platform
- Instagram is ideal for high quality photos and showcasing experiences

Be Responsive

- Answer all direct messages
- Respond to comments
- Interact with other accounts- like, comment, share, help promote your neighbours and other businesses that you admire and with whom your values align with

How To Make Social Media Management Less Time-Consuming

- Use content calendars
- Content Batching
- Scheduling Tools
- Connect Your Channels for Cross-Posting

Hashtags & Tagging

- #OEVB, #DIGOEVB, #LdnOnt
- Create your own hashtag specific to your brand and encourage customers to use it to showcase their purchases/experiences, and to participate in any promotions that you are running

Posting Best Practices

- Post at least once a day
- Use apps such as "WhenToPost" to determine best posting times
- High quality content- quality over quantity
- Keep Tone Consistent
- Limit promotional "Buy Me!" posts- focus on storytelling
- Give followers the opportunity to engage with your posts, ask them questions!



Content Ideas

Having a wide range of content is key to success. It keeps people **engaged** and interested in your messaging and ensures that they don't get fatigued from hearing the same messaging over and over again.

Below are some great ideas for content:

- People Behind the Business
- New Products/Services
- Showcase Customers
- Interior Business Shots
- Showcase new products/ services

Content Calendars for Social Media

Using a content calendar will save you time, keep you organized, and ensure your content is fresh!

Old East Village BIA Content Calendar Example:

MONTH: APRIL 2020			
THEME: N/A			
WEEK	DAY	POST TYPE (Suggestions)	TEXT
March 31 - April 1			
WEEK 1	MONDAY	Informational	Small Business Resilience - COVID
	TUESDAY	Open	OBIAA Letter to Prime Minister - COVID-19
	WEDNESDAY	Inspirational	Resources and Supports - COVID-19
	THURSDAY	Throwback Thursday	Support London Business - Resource Share
	FRIDAY	Blog	Business Share

Measure Your Success

In order to gauge how effective your efforts on social media have been, it is essential that you complete metric reports from time to time. Metrics can be collected right in the social media applications for free! This is a good way to track how many people are **engaging** with your posts, which posts are more **effective**, and which posts assist you in identifying areas for **improvement**. It is recommended that you go through your metrics at the end of the month each month.

What can Old East Village BIA do to help?

The team at Old East Village BIA is always here to help you advance your marketing initiatives. We are more than happy to share your content on our Facebook page, or feature your business in our blog. To have your content shared, or to be featured in our blog, please email info@oldeastvillage.com.

Should you require assistance setting up social media accounts or have any general questions about marketing, please feel free to **reach out**. We would be happy to sit down with you and brainstorm potential ideas!



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