

Called To Both Episode 94

Hello, and welcome to another episode of the call to both podcast. This is my first time recording for the show in my new home in Florida. So my family and I moved at the very beginning of January. And we are just starting to get settled, we still, we have so much to do. But the good news is I'm in my office in Florida, I have my desk, I have my mic, and it's like we're getting there. We're getting there, we still need to paint lots and lots of projects to tackle in the house. But it just feels right to be sitting here recording. And I am super excited about today's episode, in particular, because I'm going to be sharing with you quite literally everything I learned on a call with meta.

So I recently had a one on one strategy call with an Instagram team member at meta. And this was such a cool honor and an incredible learning opportunity that I knew I had to make a whole episode about this and share it with you here today. Hello, and welcome to the call to both podcast. I'm your host join Michelle, and you're in the right place if you're ready to grow your business while also being the intentional and present mom you want to be. This show will leave you feeling inspired, equipped with tangible tips and encouraged to go after your own version of being called to both. Let's dive in. The sponsor of today's episode is Riverside FM. Riverside allows you to record studio quality audio and video either by yourself or with remote guests. It's what I've used to record all of my guest episodes here on the show from the very beginning. And there are so many reasons why I personally chose Riverside to create my podcast. But let me just share a few.

The first one is the audio quality and ease of use, I can just send a link to my guests and they can join me in the studio. I love that Riverside allows me to chat with my guests from anywhere in the world. Even when our internet connection is a little iffy. It records everything locally to the computer, so we don't miss a beat, no more glitchy interviews, which I love. Another great feature is the video editor. And they have an AI powered clip creation tool for quick creation of social media size clips. So this is making it so much easier for me to create those vertical clips that I need for social media. And it helps me to pick the best moments from the show, click on the link in the description and head over to Riverside to start for free. And be sure to use the code joy for 15% off.

So let me let me first back up and share like how this actually unfolded and how this happened. And then I'm gonna get into some of the questions that I asked the meta strategist and just give you all the answers that they gave me. So a couple of days ago, I opened Instagram really truthfully just to like scroll and see what people were doing. And I saw a message at the top of my Instagram, just like a banner message, inviting me to talk to a content strategist at meta. So you know your girl filled that form out real quick. I have two kids playing at my feet, they're doing crazy things were just hanging out. I see this message and I don't want to ignore it. I'm scared that if I don't fill it out right then in there that it might not come back because I know how these things work. And I had actually previously heard of these types of calls happening. I think it was a year ago that I had watched another creator that I love her YouTube videos. And she had been on one of these types of calls.

So I knew this was a real thing. And it wasn't like somehow, like of spam message. And I've always wanted to sit down with an Instagram employee and ask some of my own questions. So I sent this off, I thought what the heck, that's such a weird coincidence that this would just happen right now. A few

days go by and I actually got a text saying that I'm gonna get a call at a certain time from this representative was like, Hey, I'm your Instagram like meta strategist, I'm gonna give you a call. Please be ready to answer your phone. And of course, I don't have childcare right now. And I did not want to sit on this call and have my kids immediately start asking me questions and need snacks and have a miniature crisis because they know they can just smell when you have something really important happening in your life and in your business.

My call to both moms know this, like you know this, they just they know when it's important, and they need you even more in that moment. So I actually texted back asking if we could move the call to my kids naptime. I rescheduled on meta. And the reason I did this because I really wanted to like be able to sit down and think straight and I can't do that all the time, especially on a live call with someone with my kids being two and four. And I am so impressed that my representative That meta actually scheduled around my kids naptime. So first, I think we just need to take a moment and acknowledge that meta is trying to do some stuff for their creators, and it's actually working with busy working moms like us. And I really respected that. So what it called the both thing to do, they scheduled around my naptime. So the next day, when my kids went down for their nap, I got to sit down with my new friend, Jay over at Mehta, and ask a bunch of questions. And I was sitting there, like taking notes and asking everything that I could think of, but I also had asked a couple of my friends, what would you want me to ask? Maeda. And so some of these are questions that other creatives and other women in business asked me to ask him. So let's get on the list. I'm just going to tell you the questions I asked him and then the exact answers that he gave me what I'm going to be doing with some of this information. And hopefully, you'll glean something from it as well.

Okay, so at the top of the call, he really was just asking me how I've personally been using Instagram, and what my goals were for Instagram and things like that. And if you know me, and you know me on Instagram, you know that I don't really use the feed a whole lot, especially last year, it wasn't a big emphasis for me. Instagram has probably never been my number one focus in business, I like to focus on long form content, big into YouTube big into the podcast, and my Facebook groups. So Instagram has never been a number one content channel. For me, it's really been a repurposing platform. And I think it's pretty obvious to him that that that was true. So I really told him that I focus on like connecting with my existing audience on Instagram. I'm big into stories, and DMS, and building and cultivating relationships. So if you've ever messaged me on Instagram, odds are I've gotten back to you. And it's me. Like, I don't outsource any of that as of right now.

And I'm I'm there answering questions in real time. So my first questions were actually focused on Instagram stories, and some of the questions that I had around that. So I first told him that I noticed that I get huge range of Instagram Stories, views. And so I was curious why sometimes I post to Instagram stories. And the views just don't do well, like it seems to tank and then other times, I'm getting 1000s and 1000s of story impressions. And he said, stories are extremely unpredictable. And I'm not alone in this. So if you've ever felt this way, this is really common. And he was saying a lot of creators are feeling this way. Because essentially, when you're posting to your Instagram Stories, you're competing against other creators and their friends and family. And he said that the stories will tend to be seen by those they're actually close to and interacting with, versus there's a completely different algorithm, I guess, when you're posting to your feed, or when you're using reels, or hashtags and things like that. And it's because posts that go to your feed, or reels actually have the opportunity to be featured on the Explore page.

So I thought this was interesting that it is very unpredictable for most creators. So then I asked him, you know, how often should we be posting on stories? What are some of the best practices that we can be implementing for stories, and he said, you want to play around with batching. And he encouraged me to let my stories expire, which is something that I've done. And I've realized it really does help. So actually talked about this on the podcast in a previous episode, just like best practices for Instagram, and using Instagram for your business. And this is something that I noticed in my own, just like experimenting, that he actually confirmed and he was saying if you let your stories expire, but then you when you actually do post, you post a pretty consistent amount, you're actually like creating a full fledge stories, maybe like a day in the life or you're actually telling the beginning, middle and end of something versus just kind of sporadically posting that you may experience an increase in your views. But he also said, don't use your stories for selling purchasing and cliques and that kind of thing, because it will take your stories. And this is something that I don't know how much I get behind that.

Like, I definitely still use my stories for selling and I don't think I'm ever gonna stop. I think stories are such a powerful way to sell. But I do think that we need to get really creative with how we're selling in stories and not just always post a link to the thing, because Instagram basically can tell that you're selling and they're not going to have this be as high I guess on people's stories for that day. So he recommended that instead of selling in your stories and using it for clicks like purchasing links and things like that. He recommended using a broadcast channel to drive sales over stories because they're actually easier to control. And it's easier to understand how many people are going to see See something because it's mimicking an email list. Everybody who's on a broadcast channel has subscribed to be on that broadcast channel. So it's not going to give it to 20 people when 100 people have subscribed or not show some people because it put a link, right.

So he was kind of saying the best way to actually guarantee that people are going to see the message would be to build your broadcast channel. And that was interesting. I don't, as of this recording, I don't have a broadcast channel. And I might actually be changing that now something that I underlined in my notes, I was thinking about it. And as I move into this year, there is a distinct chance you will be seeing a broadcast channel from me to try this out, because of exactly what he said, You're really guaranteeing that people are going to actually see what it is that you're talking about. He talked about broadcast channels a couple times actually in our conversation, and was saying that when you post it particularly to your feed, or reels or things that we'll get into later in this episode, you want to go ahead and share that to your broadcast channel. Because not everyone that follows you is even going to see your stuff. But everybody who subscribes to your broadcast channel will get notified when you use it, which is a really interesting point. So I thought that was an interesting take on stories.

And it sounded like in his training, and with the information that he had, that stories were really not a way to grow, they were a way to nurture, which makes a ton of sense, you're not going to get, you know, go viral through a story. So there are a way to go deeper with your audience. But you want to be careful with overt selling and stories, if you're really interested in getting those views up higher. So then my next question, I jumped to a question about the blue checkmark, because I recently got verified on Instagram. And I was curious if there's really any benefit to the blue checkmark.

And he said there actually is. And of course, he's gonna say that right? Like, what do we expect from metta except that but what was interesting to me was his answer. And he said, people feel more open to engage with these types of accounts in their statistics from what they are seeing that people will engage with you more, because they can see that it's really you. Number one, they know that it's really

you, it looks more legitimate, and they're more likely to actually engage with those accounts. But he also said that the system will recommend you sooner and higher in search and in comments. And I've noticed this, but I wanted to hear it from him. And he did confirm this.

So I thought this was kind of interesting. Essentially, like when someone's looking for your business, like your name, your search terms, if your title of your subject on Instagram is not even your name, but rather your business or what you do, for example, like business coaching for creatives, he said that the system will recommend you higher bring you up higher when someone's searching for a business. If you are a verified account, which is kind of interesting. This almost feels like when someone's googling things on Google, a lot of times I've seen higher recommendations on Google for the businesses that have a Google Business Listing. And the businesses that have a Google Business Listing that have lots of good reviews will rank even higher. So this kind of tracks it really makes sense that they will be recommending accounts that have been verified as real accounts, the highest right.

So I thought that was kind of reassuring, because I know that they have we, you know, information went back and forth, when they first came out with the blue checkmark about whether or not people who paid for verification, were going to get increased reach. Now, he didn't say that we will get increased reach, but there will be increased reach because if your name is going to come up higher when someone searches for search terms that your account is optimized for you are going to get seen more. And the same for your comments. I've noticed that when you're commenting on something, if you have a checkmark, those comments rise to the top. And that is one engagement strategy that a lot of Instagram gurus will talk about is engaging on accounts that are similar to yours that have the same audience as you for your ability to get seen in a really organic way leaving genuine comments gets you seen, especially if you have that blue checkmark. So that was interesting.

And a little bit more a little bit juicy or honestly than I thought I thought he would just say like, oh, yeah, it shows that you're a real account, but kind of going into the fact that you will be seen first in search. Very interesting to me. Okay, so next I jumped into asking how important are hashtags on Instagram? And the answer was, they are still really important. And specifically, the recommendation is that on reels especially you want to be using hashtags and you want to be using anywhere from three to eight hashtags, very specific to the content itself, which confirms what we hear a lot in that if you go broad in your hashtags, you are going to be competing With some of like the most saturated hashtags, and some of the accounts that have millions and millions of followers, but it was really comforting to me to hear like, I really only need like three hashtags on something.

And if I can make those hashtags really count with specific longtail keywords that are very specific to the content that I'm creating, that's really all I need to do. So one of my goals this year is actually to grow my account on Instagram. And this hasn't been a goal for me for a while, like I said, I haven't been focusing on Instagram, I've been focusing on a lot of other platforms. But now that I want to grow, I had some questions for Jay about that. So I asked him if, if I want to grow my Instagram account, is reels still the best way to do that? And he said, Yes, then I asked, is there an ideal number of reels that we should post per week, and the recommendation is five days a week, no more than seven days a week. And he emphasized that, if you post twice in the same day, that post ends up competing with your other post, it doesn't give you twice as much reach, it kind of just ends up giving you half the reach on both, which was kind of interesting. They also have a huge emphasis on captions, and how important those captions are for the algorithm to really understand what you're posting about.

So it's sounding more and more like, every part of the post, not just your hashtags, is actually being picked up by the algorithm by their AI by whatever tools they have to really glean what information you're talking about. And the caption is super important. And he wasn't saying like, write a long caption. So someone stays on that real long time. I know that's a strategy, but rather have a valuable caption so that people get more value from that post.

But also so that Instagram knows where to recommend you. Okay, then I asked him, if going live was actually a way to grow my account. Because I've seen people go live on Instagram, I think that's been around for forever. I guess not for forever, but it's an older feature. But I was asking him, is that a way to grow? Or is that more a way to nurture my existing followers. And he said, it's basically just good for your engagement. But no, it is not going to help you grow, which was an interesting take. So if you're looking to grow your account, a live stream strategy might not be the best use of your time, if you only have, you know, 30 minutes a day to grow on Instagram, that might not be the best way to grow. But it would be a good way to engage with your existing audience. Okay, so then I asked, okay, what should I know? Like, what? What do I need to keep in mind if I want to grow this year on Instagram? And there were two factors to this answer. The factor number one was consistency.

And what was really being emphasized to me was the system of Instagram, the algorithm of Instagram learns and recognizes patterns, and then helps optimize results. So if you're inconsistent like me, because I'm not even that consistent of an Instagram poster, Instagram can have a really hard time even knowing what you're talking about, like what you're posting about, if you're like me, and the post might be like a moving announcement, a podcast announcement, or random reel that I thought was funny. And then of course, like, Hey, we're opening doors to a course, that is not a significant pattern of consistency, and really optimizing like, the captions and the hashtags to really revolve around a given topic. This is something that I'm going to be working on this year, because I know that for sure, I'm not as consistent as Instagram would want me to be. And what he recommended was, if you want to grow on Instagram, you want to post three times a week, at least.

And I felt like this wasn't that much Monday, Wednesday, Friday. And then his recommendation was, if you can only post three times a week, make it two reels, those are ideal for growth, those are going to get you the most reach. And then one post that is a carousel of images. So it keeps people on a little bit longer. In, in his experience, it keeps people on longer. It tells a story. But also making sure that in the reels themselves, you're adding subtitles, because that's meta recommended. And that was emphasized a couple of different times was the importance of subtitles. I think this also just really helps Instagram to understand like, What did you say in that video? What did it mean, right? Like you're giving it more information just in the same way that we would sit down to optimize a blog post with alt text and titles and you might use plugins for your blog to give Google more information about what was said. That's exactly what Instagram is doing with subtitles. The second factor that was mentioned for growing your Instagram account is engagement. And this is kind of a broader term, but engagement is anything where people are engaging with you or you're engaging with someone else something could be like liking things ins comments, DMS reactions on stories, your broadcast channel is another way that your account can actually get engagement from people.

And that was really interesting. But the whole second factor. So the first factor is consistency. The second factor is engagement. And he mentioned a broadcast channel again in the engagement piece. And so that's where I was like, Okay, I think I need to pay attention to the broadcast channel part of this, because it was talked about a couple of different times on our conversation. And he basically wrapped

up my whole question about growth with the statement that the more consistent you are, the easier it is to become ranked. So be consistent. If you can be consistent, the algorithm can learn what you're about. And it can actually start to recommend you to people who would benefit from your content, which just makes so much sense. And honestly, the more I'm talking about this, the more I'm looking at these notes, this is not too different than how it works to get ranked on a website, or Yeah, like to get your blog post ranked as well. It's like the engagement piece, I feel like that is so similar to what happens on a website where you need to make sure that everybody who comes to your website doesn't immediately bounce right off, you need to make sure that when you are trying to rank that you're getting backlinks and you're getting brand authority behind your URL.

And so that really comes back to like the blue checkmark. And there's, there's a lot of overlap, in my opinion between what's happening on Instagram, the algorithm that I'm learning about here, and what you can do to get your website to rank. And so to me, that's kind of reassuring, because I've been able to get my website to rank for dozens of keywords. And we continue to do that. And that's a strategy that has worked so well for me for getting traffic, converting that traffic and making sales. And so if I can apply some of that same knowledge that I've learned about Google and website ranking, to Instagram, that I think that it would serve me well there as well. Okay, so one question I have for you is, do you have a broadcast channel? And what are you using it for? That is honestly, the biggest thing for me, my biggest next step is understanding where a broadcast channel would fit into my business, how this would be different than my Facebook groups or my email list, for example, and why would somebody want to be specifically on a broadcast channel for me?

And if you think that I should start a broadcast channel, and maybe even perhaps a call to both business channel, please let me know. I would love to hear from your perspective as a listener, what kind of broadcast channels you're enjoying, and if you think that they're worth diving into. Okay, so that has been my just about 20 minute summary of the conversation that I had with a content strategist over at Instagram. And I hope this was helpful for you and interesting. One other thing I wanted to say is, I don't know why I was chosen for this opportunity, except that I was recently verified on Instagram. So I'm wondering if maybe that has to do with it. Or if it's completely random, I really don't know. It was nothing that I knowingly did. And like I said, I'm not even the biggest user of like the feed, but I am a really, really dedicated content creator for stories. So I don't know. But I am so glad that I was able to get on this call and then share it with you here. So thank you so much for listening all the way here to the end, and I will see you next week for another episode here on the show.

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