

Called To Both Episode 53

Okay, today I want to talk to you about Instagram, specifically Instagram stories, and how you can leverage these in your business to attract new clients and even nurture those clients closer to a sale with you. Now, I feel like Instagram is just one of those things that you kind of either love it or you hate it. And I've gone through phases of Instagram just not being a priority for me and my business being kind of frustrated by it. But lately, I would say Instagram is one of my favorite social media platforms. And I think the the stories feature is the part that I use most consistently. And the part about Instagram that I actually enjoy most. And that is because it converts for me, and it works for me in my business. And I just find it a really fun way to engage with my audience. So I want to share a couple of tips for you ways to increase your story views, ways to engage with your audience and take them through a buyers journey with you. And just best practices overall, so that you're saving time, but still getting a huge impact out of your Instagram time. Hello, and welcome to the call to both podcast, I'm your host Joy 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 bow. Let's dive in.

Okay, so today, I have 10 tips for you on using Instagram for your business. And these can be stacked so that you can get a greater effect. But each of these could be things that you describe things that stand out to you some tip or two that stand out to you. And you could start implementing these into your business right away and see a huge increase in your Instagram reach. Okay, so the first thing to think about when we're talking about stories on Instagram, is that I like to think of my stories as a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. And I want to create interest and open loops so that people are engaged, and they're trying to see what ends up happening next. Now, I think that the obvious way to do this is through telling a literal story or showing your day in a sequential order. But I also think you can do this without being like a vlogger of sorts and showing your whole day, I also think you can open a loop with your audience by asking a question or posing a problem. Maybe you're sharing something that you're facing, maybe there's a problem in your business, something you're editing, you have a question for them. And that really opens a loop in their mind of wondering what you're going to say next. What is the resolve going to be? How are you going to edit the photo?

How are you going to resolve this issue that you just shared with them, and then you can wait, and they'll come back later for those results. And so really thinking of your stories, as more of a story instead of a singular broadcast post out into the internet, I think can really help you to begin to craft a narrative around your brand, your messaging your day, even just as a content creator, that will cause greater engagement with your audience. Because I know that I love to just watch people on Instagram that are sharing who they are professionally, but also who they are personally. And a lot of the time this is happening very organically in their stories because they're incorporating story into their Instagram stories. So that's the first tip. Okay, my second tip for you. And these are kind of not really in any particular order, I just think these are helpful things to know. And they do kind of stack upon each other, I guess as we get closer to the end. But the second tip is to let your stories expire.

So you don't always want to have your you know, little icon on Instagram when you tap that. And you can see that someone has a recent story in the past 24 hours, you may not always want to have that

active, because what happens is, eventually they're seeing like the tail end of every story instead of the opportunity for them to start at the beginning. And what I really like to do is let those completely expire. And then during important days or an important like marketing pushes in my business, I come back in with a fresh set of stories and that really pushes me back to the top of people's feeds on the homepage. So I like to let my stories expire on Sundays and this has been like a trial and error thing. But I find this is so easy because I don't typically even work on Sundays I like to really just unplug so I let that day be the day that all of my Saturday stories expire so that on Monday I can Come on and promote the podcast. And then it will be a fresh set of stories and it kind of comes back up in people's feeds. So think about the way that you promote your business throughout the week, think about the most important days that you want to appear in people's stories feeds.

And strategically let your stories expire right before that point. So I know this would kind of be like almost like a hair washing cycle where it's tiring, and you're trying to time it out perfectly. But you will naturally find that sometimes if you let your stories rest and completely expire, and then you come back, you will have increased engagement and increased reach, which is really, really nice. So sometimes I feel like my, my reach will dip. And I'll just take a little break, I'll take like day or two off of stories come back fresh, come back re inspired, and a lot of times, I'll see a boost at that point. Okay, so now that you're coming back to stories, after you let your stories expire, I want to talk about the very first slide that you post your Instagram stories, I think this one is actually one of the most important of your sequential feed, right. So if you end up at the top of the like when you tap into someone's stories, and you can see they have a whole bunch of stories, they have those little dashes, I feel like the first and maybe the second story holds the most weight because you're basically setting the tone for what they can expect in the rest of those stories. And if you start off kind of lame, a lot of times you will not hold people's attention through to the rest of your story.

So I've played around with this a lot. And I've noticed that if I can start off a story where I'm literally coming from nothing in my Instagram Stories, it's completely expired, and I make an introduction story and I use my face, it does way better, like way better than almost anything that I can post if I share something like a picture of myself, or if I go face to camera, and I talk a little bit, that is such a good way to start my stories, because that's what people are expecting to see is the person right. So I know that I'm way more likely to sit down and watch someone stories if they actually are telling me about their day versus like a picture of their coffee, a picture of their computer, that kind of thing. So using your face whenever you can. And then also in that very first story using an engagement sticker.

So Instagram provides those stickers, where you can react to things you can tap the emoji button, you can have people take a poll, any of those stickers are awesome for using your stories. And I like to put these all throughout the stories when I'm creating them. But especially in that first story, trying to think of how you can make that first story a little extra juicy, I think will pay off because the more people that interact with that story, the more people Instagram will show your stories to overall in your following. But I also think that when someone reacts to your story, like they hit like a reaction like icon, or they take one of your polls, they answer a question box, like they slide on a slider, any kind of interaction that is signaling to Instagram that they want to see more of your stuff in the future, which is amazing. Like, we definitely want that. So anytime I can give people a way to interact with me, that's easy, that's just a tap of a button. I'm gonna do that. So be intentional about that very first story.

And then number four is use engagement stickers as much as possible. Alright, tip number five is don't only post about your business. This is so important. And you'll probably notice this, when we go into

some of the analytics at the end of this recording, I'm going to share with you some of the ways that you can actually look at your analytics to see what content you've created, that has actually performed really, really well and then going off of that. But personal content is so much more interesting for people. And a lot of times I think as business owners, it's easy to forget that it is relevant to what we do and that people do want to see bits and pieces of our lives. And that that gives people connection points, right? When we can share a little bit about our day or our families or a vacation that we might be taking anything like that. People are seeing that and remembering little details about you.

They might see a connection point like oh my gosh, our kids have the same name or I have always wanted that car do you like that car like literally any detail can be something that somebody kind of like grabs onto and remembers about you and you never quite know what but I find that sharing things that are not business related oftentimes do really well and become a lot of like my Saturday content. So throughout the week, I do share a lot about my content I share about my videos that I'm making podcast episodes Facebook group, guest speaking whatever I'm working on that week, I'm going to talk about it in my stories for sure. But I'm always looking for ways to weave in little bits of like my motherhood and what my kids are doing and what we're up to. So For example, this past weekend, my kids have this like kitchen, this little fake, like play kitchen. And we have this chalkboard and I decided on Saturday to make it like a whole menu and I had my daughter, Clara, who's four, I had her tell me like, what all the menu items were going to be and what all the prices were going to be.

And I just wrote exactly what she put on the board. Like whatever she told me, I put it on the board, and she put that coffee would be \$200. And so I put that on Instagram. And it got so much feedback, because it's cute. It's funny, everyone was saying that they would be spending \$1,000 a day on coffee, or they'd have to give up coffee. And it just like it got so many natural conversations started because it's just a funny story. And it was endearing. And I had a little question box, like how much money would you be spending on coffee if you kept up your coffee habit, and people were like, Oh, 400 600 Or like, I don't want to even admit how much you know. And so really letting people into some of the non business aspects of your life can make it so that when you do talk about your business, you're more likely to actually have people looking at your stuff because they're bought it and they love you. They're in vested in your story and in your business in more than just the like transactional capacity of following you for your offers. So just remember that sprinkling in little bits of who you are is always always welcome, especially in stories. I feel like this is exactly what stories is made for anyway.

Hey, friend, just interrupting today's episode real quick to let you know about a free guide I have available for you called the brand authority blueprint. If you are ready to become seen as the go to expert in your field, and you want to build authority and credibility behind your name, then you're gonna love this guide, it has step by step instructions and super actionable advice for how you can do exactly that. So grab your copy of the brand authority blueprint in the shownotes for today's episode. Another way that I like to use Instagram Stories is to share my feed content to my stories. But I usually like to wait a little while before I do this. So let's say I post a reel on to the feed. If I originally post that reel at like 12 o'clock, I will wait until later in the evening to post that to my stories.

So that I give people a good opportunity to see it organically in the feed. And then I come later and I might share something about it in some way. So I was trying to like enrich that piece of content, maybe like change the background cover, say, you know, here's a little behind the scenes, give some context, add value in some way and then entice them to go watch the reel. So resharing, whatever you've put in your feed to your stories is another fantastic way to get more views on the reel or more eyes on that

post. Another cool thing you can do is just go back and find some feed posts that have done really well for you in the past reshare those to your Instagram Stories, when you don't feel like going face to camera. And maybe you share a few of your best informational posts and make it fresh content again, in your stories, most people will probably didn't see it, or won't remember it or will be happy to see the value again. Okay, so one other tip I have for you is to use the Instagram message flags feature as a way to mark your leads and to follow up with people strategically.

So I like Instagram stories because I think it invites people organically to just reach out, have conversations open up and it builds a relationship, which is what we want to do. We want to attract people and with our marketing, we want to build that connection and that trust and then you want to eventually convert those into clients and customers, right. So when I'm interacting with people, I like to use the different message features that Instagram has available to us. So you can flag a message. This is a really cool way to mark people that you maybe want to come back to follow up with or that you want to remind yourself like, Hey, we've had a conversation before. So when their name pops back up, you can see that little flag. But there's actually some more features inside of Instagram messages like you can mark a customer as paid.

And I think it's more for like a physical product business because there's one that's like shipped or waiting to ship or something like that. But I like to mark all of my clients and customers that I know have worked with me in the past as paid customers so that if they bought a product in my shop and I happen to recognize their name and we happen to be talking on DMS I'll just mark them as paid that way I know even a year down the road that at one point they bought something from me and I really like to keep that in mind especially when they're asking me a question. I get a lot of DMS it can get a little confusing, and it helps me to remember exactly who people are and where they are in my customer journey. So use the Instagram message features like to flag and keep track of things. I think that's a really fantastic way to remind yourself what leads you might want to be following up on.

Okay, so my next tip for you is to use captions, captions, Captions Captions, it takes a little bit longer to post your stories. But I think when you go to the effort, just like we talked about to add an engagement sticker, it's just like that to add your captions because most people are watching Instagram stories without sound, which is crazy. So and a lot of times, I'm in situations where I can't turn on the sound like I'm breastfeeding a baby. And I have got to just sit there and read. And the only way I'm going to consume someone's stories is if they took the time to actually put captions in. So if you're serious about Instagram stories and using them in your business, to really nurture your audience, captions are a must. I like to use just the Instagram provided captions. But I know a lot of people like the captions app in the Apple Store, they can kind of have a different looking caption, which can be really eye catching. And if you want your stories to stand out, sometimes pulling them into an external app, adding captions, and then coming back can be worth it. Okay, so tip number nine is to save your best Instagram stories into those highlight bubbles so that they can last beyond 24 hours. I really like that Instagram Stories feel like low commitment and that they disappear. But sometimes, like there's some really juicy content in there that you would like to come back to. So really utilizing your highlight bubbles on your profile is so smart, so strategic, and every so often kind of just a side note bonus here.

But every so often, I like to go through my profile, and audit all of my little highlight bubbles and make sure that if someone were to stumble across my profile, and maybe they're interested in coaching, for example, they tap that coaching bubble, I want to make sure that the first couple of slides that come up, can really hold their attention, just the same way that we were talking about how those first couple of

slides in your stories every 24 hours need to hold someone's attention, I think it's the same way with our highlight bubbles. So a lot of times that stuff can get really old. And some of like our oldest, you know, work or our oldest videos or whatever we saved in there is actually a little out of date, that's a great thing to go back and look at and make sure that if someone were to tap on one of these highlight bubbles, that it doesn't pull information from a couple of years ago that you don't actually want them to see now thinking that that's what it would be like to work with you now. And maybe it is maybe it's a great spot for them to start and you want that stuff there. But just make sure that you're being intentional and that you know exactly what's in all of those highlights, because I know that that stuff can get a little out of hand pretty quickly. But it's just a great way to save those stories for the future.

Okay, my last tip for you guys, today is tip number 10. And that is to use your account analytics to see what your audience likes. This is huge. This is going to help inform your decisions as a creator to know what people want to see what are they interacting with? What are they engaging with, and you can actually get a lot of this information through your Instagram account. So Instagram will tell you exactly what your audience likes most. So go to your professional dashboard, and then you go to insights. Then from there, you can navigate to see just your stories. So I like to go to these insights, and then my stories and see maybe the past like 30 days at a time. And first I'd like to look at my reach numbers, then profile visits, link clicks, you can also look at what stories caused people to exit. So if somebody you know you have a story that a lot of people just exited your story altogether, that can be kind of interesting, and informing of what people are liking and what people are maybe leaving on. So go to your analytics, spend some time in your analytics and look at what content does really well, I'm guessing for a lot of you the personal content or behind the scenes content is going to perform pretty well. And when I look at my account, I've noticed when I share like random outfits, things that have nothing to do with my business, those posts do so well. And it's crazy to see that and like Wait, should I be like sharing more outfits? I don't know.

But when I sit down to create a content plan for Instagram, especially in those moments where I'm feeling a little bit dry on ideas, and not as creatively inspired, just going to my professional dashboard, looking at what posts have worked, what reels are doing really well those can help inform how I should be creating my story content and then vice versa. So don't forget about your analytics. Okay, so I'm going to do a really quick recap of all 10 of these tips. Number one, think of your story as a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. Number two, let your stories expire and then completely start over. Number three be intentional. about that very first story that you post number four, use the engagement stickers as much as possible. Number five, don't only post about your business number six, share your feed content to your Instagram stories, but maybe not right away. Number seven, use your Instagram message flag feature to mark your leads or people that you may want to follow up with. Number eight, utilize captions. Number nine, save your best stories as highlights so that they can live on beyond those 24 hours. And number 10. Use your account analytics to see what your audience is resonating with. Okay, these have been some of my favorite ways to just utilize Instagram stories get higher views, higher engagement, and overall leverage Instagram for my small business. I hope this has been fun and interesting for you guys. If you learned something, send me a DM on Instagram. I want to hear from you guys. I would just love to hear what takeaway you got from this episode.

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