A-LINE's GUIDE TO UNLEASHING THE POWER OF IMAGERY

Using photos and images as a central part of your social media strategy.

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The A-LINE Guide to Unleashing the Power of Imagery

Think about the last time you spent on social media: What kind of information did you click on? What did you share? What did you post? And what do you still remember today?

Odds are that your answer to most of those questions involved images—photos or graphics that made you laugh, connected you to someone or some place far away, or helped illustrate powerful content. Photos and images jump out of social media pages because they carry the most meaning.

In a study on Fast Company, its social media experts found that tweets with images received 150% more retweets than those without images. Another study shows that Facebook posts that include images earn 53% more likes, 104% more comments, and 84% more clicks than posts with only text.

So as companies, how can we include these photos and images in our marketing efforts—and get all the views, clicks and shares that photos tend to offer? And can the average business owner or marketing employee take or make the images that get shared on sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest?

> Using photos and images is one of the easiest ways to get noticed online— even as the amount of information we see grows daily.

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Clicks

As brands, we're all sharing information on social media and hoping for attention. That attention—found in clicks, likes, shares, or just *eyes*—is getting even more difficult to find as our customers' inboxes and feeds grow ever more cluttered. To stand out in this mass of information, you have to find a quick way to get noticed.

One of the easiest ways to stand out online is to include images—photos, infographics, memes and more —in all of your social media messages, on your website and on your blog. In short, photos and images need to be a central part of any social media strategy.

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So what kind of images do you need to post? Powerful images that people like and share include:

Photos
Take the time to take good photos, and you'll be rewarded with likes, shares and clicks. No one likes blurry, out-of-focus, cluttered or dark images, so be sure to post only quality photos. Subjects can include your products or your staff, as social media fans often like to see the personal side of companies.

How to create memorable photos: Check this website for a list of 10 great apps to edit photos from your phone. Pablo, a new feature from Buffer, and PicMonkey let you add text over images in just a few steps, which ensures that your title, company or slogan is a part of every shared image

Infographics
Infographics are collections of images and easy to skim text that help summarize and visualize data-heavy information. A well-designed infographic can make even the driest information look appealing, and can turn lots of statistics into a very persuasive argument. Infographics are often shared on Pinterest as simple ways to summarize a concept in one shareable image.

How to create powerful infographics: Great infographics are usually created by design professionals, but you can try your hand at making your own with tools such as Piktochart or Easlely, or start simple with basic data-visualization (graphs and charts) apps such as Tableau or Google Charts.

> 📊 Google has tracked an 800% increase in searches for infographics in the last two years alone, making them one of the most effective marketing tactics in today's toolbox.

Memes
Pronounced "meems," memes are quirky, funny or downright bizarre images, often taken from movies, paired with snarky text or commentary. The same image is usually used several times with different text. Try to create memes that people will find funny or relatable. Avoid inside jokes or trying too hard to promote your brand.

How to create effective memes: There are plenty of easy online sites to create memes from your own photos or from stock images. Try imgflip, Meme Maker, or QuickMeme.

Once you've created the images, you want to ensure that they're shared and liked. To make your images easily found and shared, follow these tips:

Name the file appropriately.

Google and other search engines look for the file name to understand the picture that you've posted. Don't save it as "img29.jpg." Instead, take the time to rename it "Staff at yoga retreat. jpg."

Fill in alt text.

When uploading photos, many websites prompt you to add alt text (alternate text) to each image. Alt text is an HTML code that can't be seen by readers, but will be read by search engines. To help the internet know what your image is, describe it fully in a sentence, e.g., "A shopper in S.C. slips on a new diamond tennis bracelet." Be detailed, not general, and you'll climb in search results.

Include at least one Pinnable image in every post.

To ensure that readers can pin your website to Pinterest, include a feature image or at least one large image on each post. Small thumbnails or overall background images won't be found by Pinterest. If you think your site will generate a lot of pins, add text over your images so that your brand is promoted every time the image is shared.

📌 The average Pinterest pin is repinned 11 times, making it a platform that many brands can't afford to ignore.

Check Permissions.

Finally, make sure that you have full permission to use any and every image that you include on your site. If you didn't take or make the image, you can buy stock images or find free ones online. Some good databases

Summary

In short, if you ever ask, "Does this post/site need a photo?"—the answer should be, "Yes!" Take the time to add photos or images to your online text, emails and blog posts, and watch your opens, clicks and shares increase.

Do More with A-LINE.

Still unsure about making your own images? That's OK – we're here to help— contact A-LINE. Our talented team of designers can help you create the perfect image for any marketing tactic you're aiming to launch.

A-LINE Interactive is dedicated to elevating the brands of businesses and organizations in Spartanburg, SC – the community we call home.