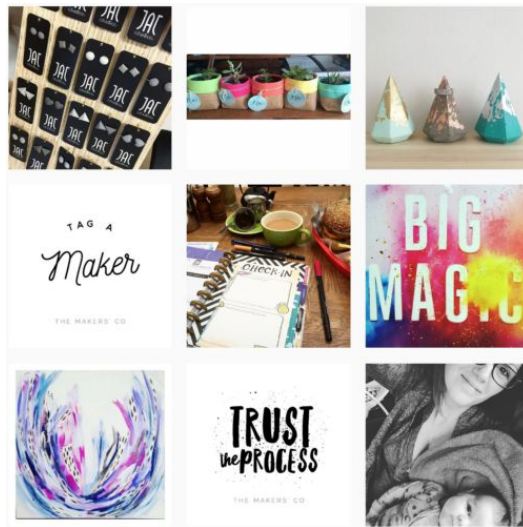


# PHOTOS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA



Ensure your visual messaging is on-brand with this extensive guide to posting on social media for your business

Written by MIKAELA DANVERS

# CONTENTS

Legal	2
Chapter 1 - Purpose & Messaging	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why does your business need to be on social media?</li><li>• Connection</li><li>• Storytelling</li><li>• Engagement</li><li>• Brand Personality</li><li>• Who are you talking to?</li></ul>	
Chapter 2 - What to Post	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Which platforms should you be using?</li><li>• Purpose of posts</li><li>• Posting Style</li><li>• Types of images to post</li><li>• Posting Schedule</li></ul>	
Chapter 3 - Creating an image library	19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Step-by-step how to</li></ul>	

## Legal

Copyright © The Makers' Collective CBR ("The Makers' Co") (ABN 73 690 948 939), 2017. All rights reserved. All trademarks and trade names are proprietary to The Makers' Co and must not be downloaded, reproduced or otherwise used without the express consent of The Makers' Co. You may access and display these materials on your computer, monitor or other video display device and make one printed copy of any whole page or pages for your personal use only. Other than for the purposes of and subject to the conditions prescribed under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) (or any other applicable legislation throughout the world), or as otherwise provided for herein, you may not use these materials in any manner without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

The Makers' Co and the author have used reasonable care and skill in compiling the content of these materials. However, The Makers' Co makes no warranty as to the accuracy or completeness of any information contained therein nor does The Makers' Co accept responsibility for any acts or omissions in reliance upon these materials. These materials are intended to be a guide only and no part is intended to be advice, whether legal or professional. All persons are advised to seek professional advice to keep abreast of any legal or other reforms and developments. To the extent permitted by applicable law, The Makers' Co, its employees, agents and consultants exclude all liability for any loss or damage claims and expenses including but not limited to legal costs, indirect special or consequential loss or damage (including but not limited to, negligence) arising out of the information in the materials. Where any law prohibits the exclusion of such liability, The Makers' Co limits its liability to the resupply of the information.

August 2017

## CHAPTER 1

# PURPOSE & MESSAGING

In this chapter, we cover:

- Why does your business need to be on social media?
- Connection
- Storytelling
- Engagement
- Brand Personality
- Who are you talking to?

## **Why does your business need to be on Social Media?**

These days, not having a social media presence can make customers think you're not a serious business. Having at least a facebook page, instagram and twitter account are expected - much like having a website, phone number and email address. As well as increased credibility, having a social media presence also increases your discoverability.

Having access to your customer across social platforms also helps you gain valuable customer insights. You can get a lot of information for you potential customers just by watching what they post - who they are, what they're like and perhaps most importantly, how they perceive your brand.

But aside from these reasons, did you know that in general, people need to experience your brand or see your product an average of 7 times before they will make a purchase? And people are also much more likely to purchase from you over your competitors, if they have a relationship with you. This has become known as the "know, like and trust factor" and is one of the key principles of successful marketing.

"All thing being equal, people will do business with, and refer business to, people they know, like and trust."

- Bob Burg

So how do you get people to know, like and trust you? Through connection and engagement (and good branding).

### **Connection**

You need to connect with your customers, on more than just a surface "oh that's a pretty picture" level.

Build trust through consistent branding - after all, your brand is a promise you make to your customers about the experience they are going to have each and every time they interact with your business.

If you put a little (or a lot) of yourself into your messaging and communications across all the touchpoints where your potential customers interact with your

brand, they get to know you a little better - they see you are a real person and will identify with you across various points.

“People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. And what you do simply proves what you believe”

- Simon Sinek

Overall you want to engage with your audience to create a conversation and build your relationship with them. This is the reason your business is on social media, because these relationships will be what makes a customer choose to purchase from you over somebody else.

## **Storytelling**

One of the most effective ways of connecting and engaging with your customers is through storytelling.

Storytelling is more than what you say with spoken or written words. It's how you communicate your message and how you connect with your target audiences.

When you tell a story and express some sort of frustration or pain that you or another person has gone through, your audience might not relate to the specific event, but they will relate to the emotion that was triggered by that event.

Here is an example:

“I remember the last time my sister-in-law came around, we had a nice afternoon chatting and all the kids were playing nicely the whole time. But I noticed my gaze wander every now and again to my old couch that I've had since uni, with the faded cushions stained with milo, and I couldn't help thinking about her lovely stylish home and feel envious of the beautiful designer cushions they always have displayed. But I could never afford anything like that. My house will never be stylish.”

Here we have a pain point - a problem for someone, that could be solved by you, if you happen to (let's say) design and sell beautiful handmade cushion covers that are affordable for a person within a mid-income range.

If you start to think about your customers as real people with real pain points that your product can solve, you'll begin to talk to them in an entirely new way. You'll begin to really speak TO them and not AT them.

Instead of your caption being:

"Monoprint shell cushion, available now"

It could read something like:

"The grubby-finger-monster struck again this morning and I have friends coming around tonight for some kid-free wine-time - luckily our monoprint shell cushion covers are made from 100% washable fabric and I've just popped them into the dryer after a quick soak in the machine - I can't wait to relax with the ladies later!"

The accompanying photo could be one with the cushion styled on a couch, or a "behind the scenes" photo of the cover freshly washed on the line, or one of your kitchen bench or coffee table with the wine glasses waiting to be filled!

I recently bought a clothes dryer after not having one for 9 years. I was thinking recently how easily an appliance company could have sold to me with storytelling:

"Imagine doing 3 whole loads of washing in one day from start to finish, and having the same sheets back on the bed that evening. No more leaving your favourite pants on the line for 2 weeks only to discover they've faded from being in the sun too long."

And now that I've got the machine, a solar installation company could sell to me along a similar vein:

"You love the convenience of using your appliances to make life easier (and let's face it - livable!), but you hate how much energy your household consumes each day. Solar will reduce your bills and be kind to the earth so you don't have to worry when you've done 4 loads in one day."

It's all about telling a story that your customer can relate to and easily put themselves into the same situation.

## Engagement

Studies are showing that the more engaged a business is with their audience, the more likely those audience members are to become customers.

*"Overall, the researchers found that evidence of interactivity is more important to consumers than the belief that a company is reputable and credible."*

- *Business News Daily*

So it's not just a matter of having a one way conversation - it's not good enough to push out content on a regular basis (be it inspirational, educational or entertaining) - you must actually interact with the consumer. This could be as simple as including a Call To Action (CTA) in the text accompanying the photo you post: "Do you do this, too? Tell me I'm not alone..." and being sure to answer any replies you get - don't leave them hanging!

Building community via social media should be a priority for small businesses. Talk WITH your followers, not at them. Ask them questions, encourage discussion, share cool things that you come across online that relates to your industry but isn't trying to sell them anything. Monitor all your accounts and answer each and every comment with something meaningful (not just an emoji - I am totally guilty of this 🙌🚗😄), and even better, see if you can ask a question back to promote more discussion and engagement. But don't be fake. People can spot that from a thousand miles away.

*"For a long time, the mantra was that social media could bring in new customers. In reality, social media is a community builder, and your biggest fans are your already-loyal customers. When small businesses treat social media as the new word-of-mouth community, the real return will follow."*

- *John Swanciger*

If you can cultivate a community and really make people feel welcome and wanted and valued, even if you don't purchase from you often (or at all!) they will still feel like they are part of something, and want to tell other people about you. This kind of person is gold to your brand, so treat them like it!



## Your brand personality

Your brand “voice” will come across to your potential customer in the tone of your posts, and this, along with imagery and overall messaging, is what forms your brand personality.

You should be conveying a consistent tone across every touchpoint with your potential customers, and this includes over all social platforms (things you post but also any comments you leave on other people’s posts), your emails, your website, your product descriptions, your sales pages, your face-to-face interactions at markets... every experience your customer has with your brand.

*"One of the biggest differentiators between Bark & Co and other pet brands is our voice and approach to talking about dogs on social and in the world. At Bark, we think that dogs are hilarious, bumbling, adorable little fart tornadoes, and this is obvious in everything from the hang tags on our products to everything we put on our social platforms."*

- Stacie Grissom of Bark & Co

Getting your brand personality to be authentic is super easy when you just be YOU.

It’s especially helpful to know exactly what your brand personality is when you start hiring people to do things like schedule your instagram posts or draft blog posts for you, or someone to handle customer support emails/calls, or run your market stall. Everyone working for your business needs to be on the same page so your brand stays consistent.

What personality traits do you want your business to have?

*casual / friendly / sophisticated / academic / low-brow / funny / crass / adventurous / calm / sweet / blunt / provocative / quirky / vulnerable etc...*

What personality traits do you NOT want your business to have?

## Who are you talking to?

Knowing who you are talking to will immediately make knowing what to post to social media SO much easier. Know who your ideal customer is, create your customer persona, and talk to that person each and every time you write a caption to go along with an image across social media.

A good piece of advice I once received was to write your captions and posts as if you are talking to one of your good friends - this won't work for everyone as it really depends on who your ideal customer is and what your brand personality is (mine is very casual), but I think if you keep this in mind when writing your communications (especially replying to customer frustrations!) it will help your customer be able to relate to you as a real person more easily.



**themakers.collective**

**themakers.collective** I hope you guys have a lovely relaxing weekend planned! I know a bunch of makers will be doing Christmas markets this weekend, I don't think markets are ever relaxing, more like a shit-tonne of hard work 🍂👷 So for you, I hope the weekend is filled with loads of sales and cash-making 💰👉 I'll be heading over to all the markets in Canberra today at 10am! 💕💕

**#themakerscollective**

**themakers.collective** **#makestuffeve** ×  
**ryday #getcraftylikeafox**

**#businessmama #businesswoman**

**#femaleentrepreneur #ilovemyjob**

**#handmadebusiness #handsandhustle**

“ . . . ” “ . . . ” “ . . . ”

## CHAPTER 2

# WHAT TO POST

In this chapter we cover:

- Which platforms should you be using?
- Purpose of posts
- Posting Style
- Types of images to post
- Posting Schedule

## **Which platforms should you be using?**

Firstly you need to consider if your audience is actually using social media, and if so, which platform are they on? There is no point creating an account for your brand if your audience is not using the platform. Males aged 50-70, for example, would only make up a small percentage on Instagram, compared to say females aged 18-30. I hear lots of people express concern over whether they should be on Snapchat for their business - unless your target audience is the under 25 market, I wouldn't worry too much about it!

Don't make the mistake of treating all platforms equally - each channel should be viewed as its own ecosystem with vastly different audiences consuming your content in a different way. Twitter followers look and act differently to Instagram followers, who are again different to Facebook followers. Even though members of each audience may overlap, they still consume content differently in each place.

As a general rule, don't post the exact same thing in the same way to every platform. What this means, is that if you are trying to be across all the main platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest), you're going to get overwhelmed pretty quickly if you're trying to come up with new images and content for every one of them on a regular basis.

Pick one social platform (the one where your ideal customers are!), and do it really well. Put all of your community building, connecting and engaging efforts into that one platform. Once you have it humming along nicely (with a good system for creating content and scheduling quickly and efficiently), branch out into other platforms.

## **Purpose of Posts**

Every post needs to add value to your audience members lives in some way, otherwise you're just wasting their time and adding to the "noise" that is the online world.

There are many different ways you can add value to a person's day via social media. As a business owner, you want to either Educate, Entertain, Inspire or Relate to your customer.

Educate your audience on topics that relate to your products or services, without trying to sell anything to them.

Entertain your audience with humour, amazing visuals, aha moments or current news of your industry.

Inspire your audience with before & afters, images showing the benefits (not features) of owning your product, or show them what's possible after purchasing your service - give them something to aspire to.

Relate to your audience by showing them there is a real person behind the brand, share some behind the scenes snaps of your business or images of your family/home life.

Importantly, there needs to be a balance and a blend of these categories. Too much of one or another and you lose the value of your overall story or message, and also the interest of your viewer.

As an example, a photo I posted to Instagram of me with my husband got the most likes out of ALL my images, closely followed by a photo of my daughter just after she was born and another of my kids and me. These are my most liked photos - but I only post personal photos every 8th post (about once a week). If I was posting photos of my husband or family all day everyday, everyone would get tired of it pretty quickly!



Each post can and should relate back to your business values, so can include lifestyle images and photos of your family as mentioned above, but you need to remember why your audience is there and also your endgame - you want to help them solve a problem with your products or services.

You may of course choose to use a certain social media tool as your selling platform, in which case perhaps a majority of your images will be your own products. I would be wary of this for two reasons though - firstly, your audience does not want to be sold to every single time they come in contact with your brand. If you're using social media solely to sell on, where are you building your customer relationships? And secondly, you don't own your social media account. Your shop could be closed down for any number of reasons and there might not be anything you can do about it. I'd advise against having all your eggs in one basket, so to speak - [See my blog post on why you should have your own website](#).

Generally, users are on social media to be entertained, not to buy things - and the brands that do well are those that recognise this and curate the content they publish accordingly.

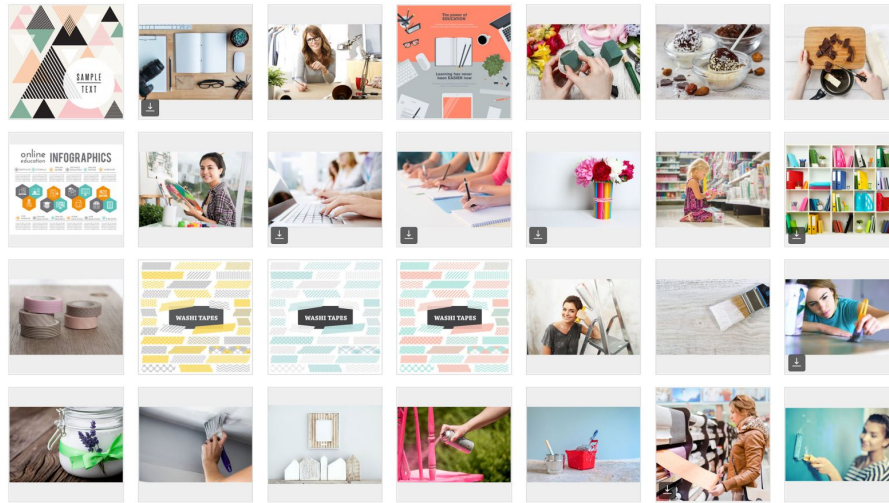
## **Posting Style**

Once you have worked out how you bring value to your audience and the purpose of your posts, it's important to create a posting style. Your posting style needs to be consistent in terms of image style, colour, mood, type (if you have any), and captions. And of course all of these things need to tie directly back into your brand.

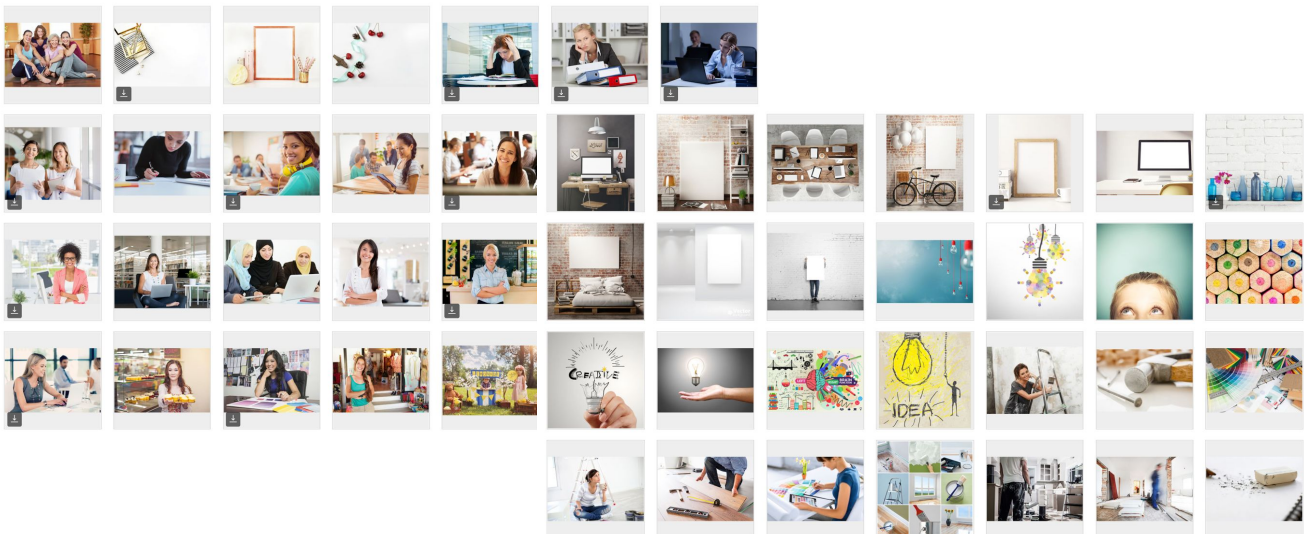
Consistency is key.

My advice is to create a mood board of the style of images that fit your brand values - I found that even if I didn't refer back to the mood board all that often, whenever I was posting a new image I would think to myself "Would this fit with the rest of the images in my mood board?" and that gave me a really clear indication of whether it was suitable or if I needed to edit the image or find a new one.

You can see here some snippets of my mood board images (which was just a lightbox I curated in Shutterstock, but you could use Pinterest or even grab images and bring them into Photoshop or Canva to create a collage).



My image style is light, bright and colourful, featuring women aged mid 20's to mid 40s, and I try to ensure I include a diverse range of women in my images (I encourage you to do the same).



In order to develop colour consistency, you can try a few techniques. One strategy you can follow is to pick one colour from the last photo you posted and ensure your next photo has that colour in it. Or stick to a specific colour palette for all of your images (ie monochrome, or rainbow, or pastels etc). You can also create consistency by having the same colour for your backgrounds (perhaps a range of 4 or 5 colours that match your brand) that you can rotate between images.



Also be sure you are editing your images consistently. If you are using a filter (I recommend NOT using filters, but if it adds value to your brand aesthetic you may choose to do so), make sure you use the same one on your images to achieve a cohesive look and feel. I generally make sure I'm taking good photos to begin with (look at the Photography for Beginners and Product Photography classes if you need help with this), and then just edit the brightness and contrast of my images using the native iPhone photo editing software, or the Instagram editing function (the facebook image editor is not great at this moment in time so I'd steer clear of that).

*Side note: Don't spend hours editing each photo. We're trying to be efficient in our businesses, and if you're spending time fretting over the small stuff instead of creating and selling your products (ie, making money), you're never going to grow.*

## **Types of Images to post**

There are a multitude of types of images you can post to social media, and I recommend you look into what types your audience responds to most, and have a mix of 3-5 from the categories below in your posting schedule.

- Product Photos (flatlay, shelfies, vignettes)
- Aspirational images (where do they want to be, show them what that looks like)
- Quotes / Typographic images (this can be inspirational, entertaining or even educational!)
- Contests / Giveaway graphics (make sure you're adhering to rules around running competitions)
- Behind the Scenes (your workspace, product testing, shopping for supplies etc)
- Work in Progress (show the process of your product being made, this adds value to your products when people see how much work goes into them)



- Personal photos (only occasionally!)
- Customer-centric (user generated content / testimonials)
- Blogger / Brand Rep photos (engage an influencer to create some content for you)
- Seasonal / Holiday images (Mothers Day, Halloween etc)

A little tip here is to try and post images that will allow your audience to put themselves in the story - photos of hands doing something with your product, or people in common situations that your customers face - this goes a step further to getting your potential customer to see how your product or service can help them.

The most important thing when deciding on what types of images to post, is to ensure that they all work together as a cohesive “story” of your brand - not just for Instagram but Facebook too - make sure that when your account or photo album is viewed as a whole, that the styling and messaging is consistent across the images and also with your brand. Your feed should be curated: You can do a regular monthly audit and any images that seem out of place or not on-brand can be deleted or archived.

## Posting Schedule

You need to be posting regularly, I recommend at LEAST 5 times a week, if not daily or twice a day. Do not be afraid of “spamming” your audience, because it’s unlikely that they are seeing all your posts anyway because of the way the algorithms work on Facebook and Instagram.

*Side-note: Don't get angry at the “algorithm” - it's a waste of energy and somewhat unwarranted. The algorithm is what will actually help you reach more of the right people once you are ready to start advertising (which I highly recommend you do, if you want to grow your audience and business).*

It’s generally a good idea to follow the 80:20 rule (80% of your posts should be giving something of value to your audience: Educate, Inspire, Entertain or Relate - and 20% is asking something of them). My IG feed is divided into sets of eight, so I actually have a 7:1 ratio where 7 posts are bringing value (hopefully!) and 1 post of the 8 is asking them to go to my website to read a blog post (which could also be seen as a give).

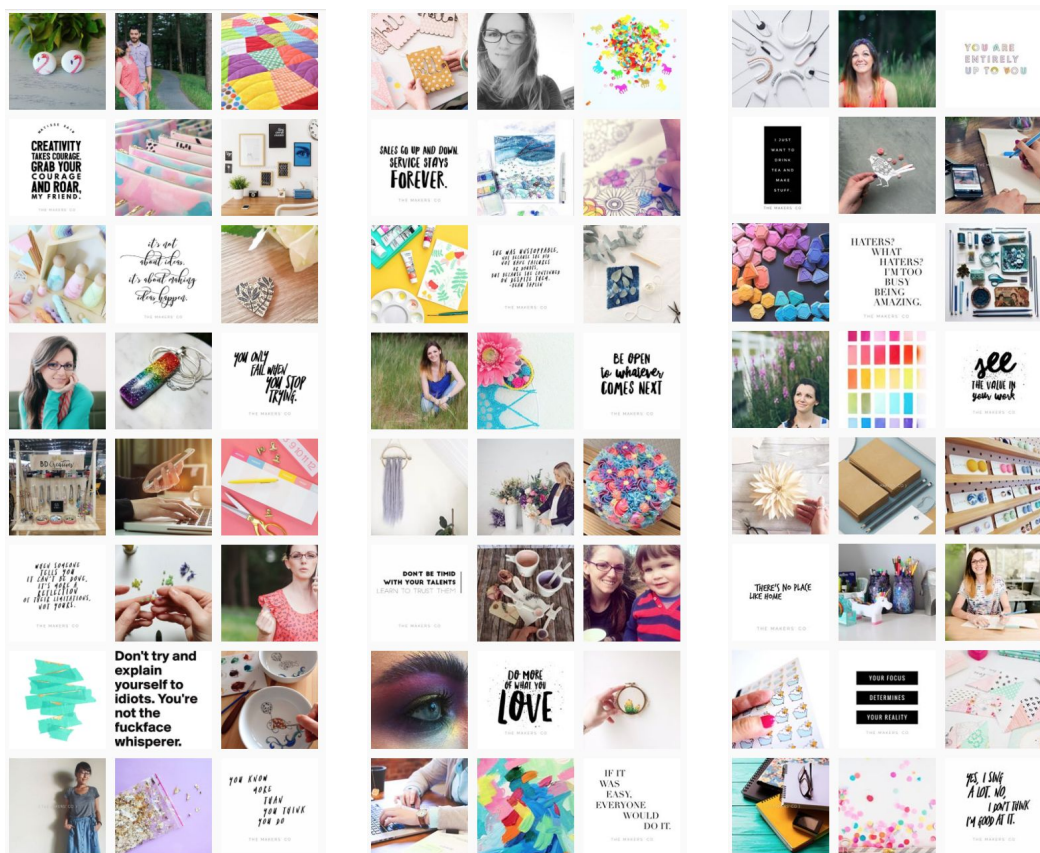
On facebook it’s a little different: you can still stick to the 80:20 rule, but really all of your content should be non-promotional (ie, don’t include a link to your shop in anything that is not an ad). I’m not an expert in this area, but at the moment it seems like facebook really wants you to pay to reach your audience when you are promoting something with a link, because again, people on social media want to be entertained, not sold to. Of course this all depends on your audience and how you bring value to them - if they are following you specifically to hear about the next sale, then you might get great reach and engagement on promotional posts! There is not really a black and white answer here, but by knowing your audience really well, you’ll get a better feel of what you should be posting.

It’s also a good idea to create rhythm when developing your posting schedule. Rhythm is a principle of design: It helps to associate elements by repeating a common stylistic feature, either in a single design/image or across a series, and is commonly used in branding to bring cohesion to a series of visual elements. Familiar examples in design include bulleted lists, or headings that are styled the same way across multiple pages. In terms of your photos and imagery, rhythm can be accomplished with the recurrence of a certain colour, or layout, or physical element throughout your photos, or in the order in which you post certain types of images.

My posting schedule for The Makers Co is in sets of eight. I've created rhythm by repeating the types of images I post in sets of 4.

- |               |           |              |                        |
|---------------|-----------|--------------|------------------------|
| 1. Typography | 2. Bright | 3. Mikaela   | 4. Maker Feature/Story |
| 5. Typography | 6. Bright | 7. Blog Post | 8. Maker Feature/Story |

I do it in sets of 4 because I like the variety and I like the visual aesthetic of having my Typographic posts running vertically. You could choose to create rhythm with repeating image types in sets of 2, 3 or 4, it just depends on how you want your "story" to look when people are viewing your feed in grid-form.



When developing the visual style of your brand for social media, look at your competition or any other business that share your target audience (potential collaborators!) and look at their style - try to work out what it is about their images that appeals to your shared audience. Be careful not to "copy" or fall into the trap of trying to be like them for the sake of being trendy. Trends come and go - we're in this for the long haul. You're building a brand that will stand the test of time.

## CHAPTER 3

### CREATING AN IMAGE LIBRARY

A common problem I hear from people is that they don't have time to create the images to use across social media, or just as they're ready to post something, it's too dark/rainy/cold/the baby is crying and they can't get the shot.

There is a simple answer to this: You need to create an image library to draw from for your posts.

This does NOT need to be a huge production - you don't need to hire a photographer or a photo studio or get models (unless you want to and by all means, I highly recommend doing a professional photo shoot once or twice a year and updating your headshot at the same time!). Set aside 1 or 2 hours once a month, prepare in advance, and you can easily start building an image library of hundreds of on-brand photos that you can draw on at a moment's notice to post out across social media with a relevant caption and call to caption.

#### **Here's what you need to do:**

1. Brush up on your Beginners Photography and Product Photography skills if you need to
2. Spend 1 hour making a list of the types of photos you want in your library (flatlays, X and Y products, quotes etc)
3. Collect your product and any props you will need (decor for vignettes, coloured cardboard for backgrounds, desk scenes etc) being sure your props also match your brand aesthetic
4. Schedule 1-3 hours in your diary or planner for when you are going to create your images (make sure this is a time when there will be good lighting, or organise your lighting if needed)
5. Bring everything together and start snapping:

- Set up a scene and take photos from all different angles (you can then use angle #1 for one post, and angle #2 for another post a few days, weeks or months later)
  - Swap out the product for this scene, and do the same or different angles again
  - Repeat as many times for as many products as you like
  - Set up the next scene, and start snapping from different angles
  - Swap out the props and do it all again.
6. Batch edit the images: Spend 1 hour each week going through the images and doing some light editing - hopefully they are pretty good to begin with and won't need much, but a subtle boost to the brightness and contrast is always good, and perhaps some cropping if necessary
  7. Save the images to your phone and also your computer or ideally in the cloud (Google Drive, Dropbox etc) so you can access them from anywhere at any time

Using this system, you can quickly build up a large library of images, all slightly different, that you can use across multiple platforms in different ways at different times.

## **Disclaimer**

This is the BETA version of this guide/class

Chapter 4 - Technical is currently being written and will be added at a later date, including activities and exercises for you to complete.

## **Additional Resources**

*More on storytelling:*

<https://ozcontent.com/blog/best-corporate-storytelling-examples/>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeff-charles/4-fantastic-examples-of-b\\_b\\_9852356.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeff-charles/4-fantastic-examples-of-b_b_9852356.html)

*Further reading on Know Like and Trust factor (suitable for service based businesses):*

<http://daniellemcdonald.com/6-ways-you-can-build-the-know-like-trust-factor/>