

EPISODE 18: SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY FOR A SERVICE-BASED BUSINESS

with Stevie Dillon

Marketing for Creatives Show
at IntNetworkPlus.com

Announcer:

Turn your hobby and freelance work into a profitable business! Make your marketing easier by applying the strategies of experienced entrepreneurs and have more time to do the work you love. You are listening to the Marketing for Creatives show with your host Marina Barayeva.

Marina Barayeva:

Hi everyone, this is Marina Barayeva. And welcome to another episode of Marketing for Creatives show. In this episode, we gonna talk about how to create a social media strategy for a service-based business.

Being consistent on social media is the key to building connection, following and get more people using your service. However, it's easier to say than do. Let's say you post something on social media from time to time and still nobody calls you because of what they saw on social media.

There can be many reasons why it happened, but the base of any business success is planning and it's time to plan your social media strategy.

I'm super excited to introduce you to our today's expert Stevie Dillon.

Stevie is the owner of Stevie Says Social, a social media consultancy which provides training, education and strategy services to service-based businesses looking to lift their social game.

Stevie is an ex-lawyer turned social media marketer and has spent the past ten years working with some of the biggest brands in Australia on marketing strategy and social media.

She writes extensively on the topic of social media and has had her work featured on such sites as Social Media Examiner, Smart Company, and Business Chicks.

Marina Barayeva:

Hi, Stevie. How are you today? Welcome to the show.

Stevie Dillon:

Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Marina Barayeva:

It's amazing to have you here. We want to learn a little more about you. Could you introduce yourself to our audience?

Stevie Dillon:

Yes, sure. My name's Stevie and I have a social media consultancy that focuses on training, education, and strategy for service-based businesses.

I used to be a solicitor, so a lawyer, many moons ago. I went from that to working in marketing and then from marketing into social media marketing.

When I got into social media marketing, I really saw a gap for businesses like lawyers and real estate agents and many cool professionals, basically people who sell their services or expertise for a living, and teaching them how to leverage social media to attract more clients.

I have had my business in its current form for about a year now. I love helping businesses like that learn how to use social media the right way.

Marina Barayeva:

That's fantastic. We need a little help here. Can you help us to create a social media strategy for service-based businesses? How to do it?

Stevie Dillon:

Where to start? The biggest thing to keep in mind is it's completely different to a product-based business.

If you're a product-based business, a lot of the time you can take some beautiful photos of your products, put it up on social media and have sales start coming into the door as easy as that.

With a service-based business, it's a much slower burn. It's really about two things. It's about having people know you, like you, and trust you enough to want to do business with you. And that's all about building connection.

Then on the flip side, it's about having people trust in your expertise and authority enough to feel like they know what you're talking about and that you'll do a good job for them.

When it comes to a social media strategy for a service-based business it's really about, number one, adding value; making sure that you're always either educating or entertaining or inspiring people with your content.

And then on the flip side, building connection: telling stories that showcase your expertise, your points of difference, and the things that make you *YOU*, to get them to connect with you and want to do business with you.

Marina Barayeva:

Educate, entertain, and inspire.

Stevie Dillon:

Inspire, yes.

Marina Barayeva:

Let's say I'm a graphic designer, or I'm a hairstylist, or I'm a photographer. How can I do all of those three things there?

Stevie Dillon:

Where do you start, yes? It's about finding out what is the most relevant for you. It will differ depending on your industry.

Say, for example, if you're a hairdresser, you might decide to really focus on something like educating people, so showing people how you do what you do. It might be creating short video tutorials on different hairstyles or showing people how to get the perfect blonde.

It's basically giving away your expertise with the knowledge that it's only going to make people more likely to do business with you because it shows that you know what you're talking about.

You're helping them rather than selling to them, and ultimately that's what endears people to you. That's what gets them to know you, like you and trust you enough to pick up the phone one day and say, "I want to book a hair appointment with you."

Marina Barayeva:

There are a lot of platforms that we have: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and all the others. One opinion I hear from people is like, "I can be there too. I can be on Twitter. I can be on Facebook. I can be on Instagram."

Stevie Dillon:

"I can be everywhere!"

Marina Barayeva:

"I can be everywhere." And then they post one or two pictures, three pictures, and then they give up. "It doesn't work for me."

Stevie Dillon:

Yes, I hear that a lot. I hear that a lot from people that come to me for social media services actually.

Marina Barayeva:

Why would I miss one more social network for promoting my work? What do you think about this?

Stevie Dillon:

Probably the biggest misconception that a lot of businesses have when they dive in is that they underestimate how time consuming it can be to produce really high-quality content that makes you stand out enough to make it worthwhile.

The first thing that I will always, always, always say to a client is pick one platform that you know that your target audience is on and start there. Once you feel like you're really doing a good job with that, then consider another platform.

But the biggest thing to keep in mind is that because there are so many people and so many businesses all fighting for attention on social media these days, in order to stand out and make it worthwhile, you really have to spend time doing a good job and it has to be super high-quality content, produced consistently in order to get cut through.

If you don't have the resources in terms of a team or the people to really leverage more than one platform, I'd say just focus on one and go all in on that doing a great job and go from there.

Marina Barayeva:

How do you choose which platform to use?

Stevie Dillon:

Generally, there are three things that you would take into consideration.

In terms of whether to go with more than one platform or not, it's resources. But then when you get down to which platform it is:

- Is your target audience there?

In Australia, we have a report called the called the **Sensis Report** and that basically goes through each of the different platforms and exactly what the demographics are for each platform. If there's a similar report, look at that and make sure that you're target audience is there.

The other thing to keep in mind is:

- What's your goal?

Different social media platforms will do different things. For example, if your goal is that you want to drive people back to your website, potentially a platform like Pinterest could be great for a creative entrepreneur for that.

If, for example, your goal is brand and building a personal brand, Instagram can be great for that. If your goal is building community, Facebook is really becoming the platform for that.

Think about your target audience and then think about what your goal is, and then choose from there.

Marina Barayeva:

If we don't have this kind of report, how else can we find where our target audience hangs out?

Stevie Dillon:

Broadly, Instagram is a female skew and generally it's about that 25 to 44 year old age group.

Facebook, literally everybody is there. So that's a platform that across all age groups, across all demographics, everyone has their attention on Facebook. That's a good one to start with.

Pinterest is again a real female skew, an older demographic, 35 plus. There are generally a lot of people on there that are looking for inspiration.

Then a platform like LinkedIn is great for professional services. For example, if you're a lawyer and you're looking to build professional connections, that's a platform that I'd look at focusing on.

That's just generally but, yes, it's really important to know who that target audience is before you dive in. Otherwise you're not talking to the right people and you're never going to have them become potential clients.

Marina Barayeva:

Still, if we get to the social media platform, there are a lot of people.

How to attract the right audience for a social media post?

Stevie Dillon:

The biggest thing is just to make sure, and it's a big mistake because ultimately we're all there to promote our businesses, that this is not where you should be focusing your content efforts.

The most important thing in terms of a content split, I suppose, in terms of what to post is, for a service-based business, it's different for a product-based business, but a service-based business should be... Around about 25 percent of your content is promotional: it's promoting your business.

The other content should be a mixture of value content, going back to that educating, entertaining and inspiring, and then also connection content. That is content that is telling stories that get people to endear themselves to you and your business. It's brand personality and the things that make you different to everyone else.

What I would recommend is think of social media as a value exchange; people will never follow you unless they're getting something of value in return. Always think about that when you're putting together your content plan.

Marina Barayeva:

How would you mix your personal posts and posts related more to your work?

For example, if we have a designer that will post maybe their designs but sometimes people post their selfies or office or working environment.

How would you mix it up?

Stevie Dillon:

I would recommend, for example, on Instagram I would do in every set of nine squares four value posts. Four posts where you're, for example, educating people on the process of what you do. Three connection posts, that's just telling stories that showcase, number one, your brand personality and number two, your points of difference.

As an example, you might have as one of your key values in terms of your brand personality, that you're a fun business. You'd showcase that in your connection posts by telling stories about some of the fun things that you do in the office with your staff. You might have music playing on Fridays and that sort of thing.

Some people say that's quite fluffy content but ultimately in terms of your content mix, you've already got your value posts, you've got your promotion posts, and those connection posts are what are endearing people to you.

Marina Barayeva:

We've got a lot of stuff. Do you post content from other people, like curated content? Would you recommend that?

Stevie Dillon:

It depends on the platform. Generally original content will work best but it can be hard in terms of your resourcing, so yes (laughter).

I would recommend that you stick to about a 60/40 split. Sixty percent of your content is original content and then up to 40 percent of your content is relevant curated content that's going to be of value to your audience.

Marina Barayeva:

Many of our listeners are solopreneurs: they work by themselves or they have one or two people in their team, but it's still not enough. And when you run your business, it's so hard to be in business and on social media.

Stevie Dillon:

It's hard work.

Marina Barayeva:

You don't realize until you get there.

Stevie Dillon:

Yes (laughter).

Marina Barayeva:

How to keep up with everything?

Stevie Dillon:

That's honestly one of the biggest frustrations that people have when it comes to this.

Bottom line is it is unfortunately something that takes time. What I think one of the most important things to remember is that it is a long-term play.

So, if you're consistently doing this over time, you're going to end up with the sort of attraction business that's bringing in clients without you having to do too much in terms of that kind of push sale of marketing.

In terms of how to resource it, I would highly recommend batching your social media posts. I would schedule out three hours on a Monday morning, before the week gets too crazy and hectic, to sit down and to really plan ahead.

Try to get as much of that content produced, scheduled, and ready to go for the coming week so that you're not having to worry about it when you've got a million other things to do and it's a Wednesday afternoon and you've got the phone ringing and you're thinking about what to post.

Another tip around that is to have a list, potentially on your mobile phone, it doesn't need to be anything fancy, of content ideas.

I often find that I'll have a flash of an idea of something that I want to put up on my social media and then I'll forget when I sit down on a Monday morning to actually post it.

If you've got, on the notes of your phone, a list going of all the sorts of questions that you're clients are asking, all the sorts of little stories that happen throughout the week, then when you get to Monday and you're ready to sit down and schedule out your content, you already know what you're going to post. It makes it so much easier.

Marina Barayeva:

During the week, for example, you have something coming up you've done your design, and posted that. And then you talk a little bit about your clients And then Monday comes up and you're like, "I need to schedule for the next week but I already talked about those things last week and I don't really have too much content to post now."

Stevie Dillon:

I would always go back to, if you're ever stuck in terms of your value posts, just think about the questions that your clients are asking you every single day, because you can easily make content teaching them about that sort of thing.

That's why it's so important to have a stockpile of that sort of content ready to go. Every time somebody has an enquiry or has a problem or asks you a question, put that in the notes of your phone. Then you've got a stockpile of content for when you're feeling stuck because you feel like you've already posted all of the other relevant posts around your work.

Does that make sense?

Marina Barayeva:

It does. Can you recommend us any social media services that will help us with social media? Which are your favorites?

Stevie Dillon:

In terms of something like scheduling, I still would always recommend scheduling posts on Facebook directly into Facebook.

Marina Barayeva:

Why?

Stevie Dillon:

The reason for that is that Facebook will always give priority to content that is called natively posted on that platform. They will slightly penalize in terms of reach any scheduling tool that is used to post content onto the platform. Always use Facebook. You can schedule in advance on Facebook, so do that for that.

For Instagram, if you're a visual business and you want to make sure that you can make your feed look really visually appealing and pretty, I would recommend either **PLANN** or **Planoly**. They allow you to move your images around, to make sure that they all fit really nice together before you post them.

Then on something like Pinterest, I would recommend a scheduling tool called **Tailwind**. That lets you schedule all of your content in advance and it will automatically schedule that out for you at the key times that they know from your analytics, your audience is online. That makes it really easy for that platform.

Yes, they're the three in terms of scheduling that I would highly recommend.

Marina Barayeva:

Thank you so much. We've got the tools in our pocket. Now we can save some time.

Stevie Dillon:

Yay!

Marina Barayeva:

When you create a social media strategy for service-based businesses, what mistakes do people usually make when they plan a social media strategy?

Stevie Dillon:

The number one thing again is that they sell rather than add value. That is literally the biggest thing that I see, and it's the number one reason why a lot of business owners come to me frustrated that they're posting on social media but nobody's seeing their posts.

One thing that is consistent across just about all of the key social media platforms is that there is an algorithm that gives preferential treatment to popular content. What that means is that if you put a post-up, for example on Facebook, and it's getting likes and comments early on, it will generally then push that piece of content out to more people.

If you're posting something that's really salesy as a service-based business, it's not something that's going to encourage people to like and comment. It's going to penalize you in terms of reach.

The most important thing is to always, always, always think about what your audience would want, add value, tell stories, and create connection, because that's the sort of content that people will like and comment on and it's ultimately the sort of content that will do well and get the reach that you're hoping for in terms of your business's exposure on social media.

Marina Barayeva:

How do you create connection? Because when you post something on social media and sometimes like on Instagram you'll get 30 likes and on Facebook you have one like. Sometimes you think, "What should I do with that? I got one like, it's cool. But what's next?"

Stevie Dillon:

A like is a like. The biggest thing with creating connection and I know from my own personal Instagram account. The posts that do really well are the posts where I'm telling a story about, for example, the reason why I do what I do in my business, what motivates and inspires me or it might be a story about how I decided to leave my corporate job and go into starting my own business.

I really story tell and it's a funny word but that is literally going through and telling a story in a real, authentic way around whatever it is.

Always that will get firing away more engagement, likes, and comments, than anything else that I'll post on my personal Instagram account.

Marina Barayeva:

Fantastic. There are so many cool tips over there. If you would put that into a strategy, because we need a social media strategy, what are the three steps our listeners could begin with to create a social media strategy for service-based businesses for one month?

Stevie Dillon:

I would say the very first thing is to be really clear on what your business objectives are. What do you want to achieve in your business in the next three months? It might be that you want to increase your revenue. It might be that you want to increase market shares. List those things down.

Step two, list out the social media goals that will help you with those business objectives. You might say that you want to increase your following by 300 in the next one month, three months whatever is it, because that's going to help you out with your business objective of brand awareness for your business.

Then from there I would look at three tactics that help you achieve those social media goals and the biggest ones, firing away, in terms of what works is consistently posting high quality content. How do you know if the content is high quality? Check in your analytics what your most popular posts in the past have been and create more of that.

Number two, collaborations. Collaborate with similar but non-competing businesses in terms of, it might be that you feature them on a guest post, whatever it is, so that you can get in front of their audience and build your following that way.

The third thing is socialize. For 15 minutes a day, every single day, get on either Facebook, Instagram, whatever the platform is and authentically engage with other accounts because that's how you'll get found and that's how you'll build the connections that you need to grow your following and get your content seen.

Marina Barayeva:

Fantastic. What little step can people do already today?

Stevie Dillon:

I think probably the easiest win if your social media goal is to grow your following, is socializing. Fifteen minutes, set a timer, go through a Hashtag that you know that your ideal client uses or go through an account.

Say for example if you're a hairdresser, you might go onto a beauty salon account because they might have followers in your target market and literally go on and like their content, leave comments and follow them. That will be the best way that you can grow your target audience.

Marina Barayeva:

Thank you so much Stevie, so many great tips.

Stevie Dillon:

You're welcome.

Marina Barayeva:

How can we find more about you? How can we connect with you? Tell us a little bit where.

Stevie Dillon:

Probably the best way if you're looking for some more tips, I actually have an eBook with 20 pages, 100 Social Media Tips, you can get that on my website at steviesayssocial.com/ebook.

Marina Barayeva:

Where are you on social media?

Stevie Dillon:

[StevieSaysSocial](#) on Instagram and [StevieSaysSocial](#) on Facebook.

Marina Barayeva:

Fantastic. Thank you so much. It was so awesome to have you on the show today Stevie.

Stevie Dillon:

Thank you so much for having me.

Marina Barayeva:

Thank you for joining me for this episode today. You can find the show notes and the full transcript of the episode at intnetworkplus.com.

And by the way, give me feedback. What other topics do you want to hear? Do you think this is good, do you think there is nothing for you here? I want to hear everything that you have. You can always email me at marina@intnetworkplus.com, and your email will get right to my inbox. That's all for today, and I'll see you next time.

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