

The Power of Social Media Stories for Marketers

How Social Media Stories
Are Making Their Way Into Marketing

Social Media Stories - Cheat Sheet

You've read the full eBook, now it's time to start putting everything you've learned into action. Here are the key, critical steps you need to take to begin enacting your social media Stories strategy, along with everything you should have learned so far.

What Are Social Media Stories?

Social Media Stories are short videos that are only available for a limited period of time (normally 24 hours). This trend began on Snapchat but is also now available on many other platforms including Instagram, Facebook, Skype, YouTube, and more. We will be focussing our efforts on Instagram, Facebook, and potentially Snapchat depending on the type of audience.

Why Should You Care?

Social Media Stories have a particularly good open rate for a number of reasons.

- They are featured prominently in the feed (above other types of post)
- They help to build stronger relationships with your followers by showing 'behind the scenes'
- They provide useful ways to get feedback and information from your audience
- They inspire FOMO – Fear Of Missing Out
- They are currently very trendy
- The organic reach that businesses have on Facebook and Instagram is shrinking, making this a viable alternative

In short, Stories have become big business in the last few years and they help you focus on what really matters: the quality of your relationships with your followers.

How Do You Create a Story?

Creating a Story is extremely simple, though it varies slightly from one platform to another. Generally, it involves opening the app or selecting the Story function, and then pointing the

camera at yourself or the subject. You will normally hold shutter button to make a video, or press it just once to snap a photo.

Stories typically are no longer than 15 seconds, so it's important you learn to get your point across very quickly. If you don't get everything across in that time, then platforms like Instagram will automatically break the video down into lots of smaller bits.

Most platforms only allow you to record stories from your phone or tablet – you won't be able to upload them from desktop. That said, you can use a ready made video or photo selected from your gallery.

You can then normally add a number of different stickers to the post which will not only decorate it, but also help you to add additional information and features.

One great example is the "Ask Me Anything" sticker on Instagram, which invites users to type their questions. This is a great way to help drive a few sales and also to get some useful feedback from your market.

Other options include writing on the photo or video, or applying filters to change the way it looks. Snapchat is well known for its 'Lenses' which are filters that distort facial features and which can be applied prior to taking the photo.

Monetizing

One of the limitations of Instagram has always been that you aren't able to include a link in the description of a normal post. This of course limits the ability of marketers to link directly to their products and services.

Stories have this limitation to varying degrees across platforms.

Snapchat: Snapchat keeps things simply by allowing you to simply add a link to your photo or video. This means you can link to any product or service page.

Facebook: Facebook let's you include a "Call to Action," which can include "Learn More." So this is the next best thing.

Instagram: Instagram makes life more difficult. If you have 10,000+ followers or a verified account, then you can add a "swipe up" link. Otherwise, you will have the option to use a poll for example.

This will give you the ability to ask questions like “who’s interested in this product?” and then to see *who* selected “yes.” You can then make a note of those qualified leads and get in touch with them to sell directly!

Frequency and Timing

The best time to post a Story to any platform is just as people are getting home from work in the evenings, so around 6pm local time.

In terms of frequency, the general advice is that you can’t be too frequent. For other types of post, the advice is usually to post no more than once or twice a day. This is because the algorithm means that a feed can otherwise get ‘clogged’ with your content, which will upset your followers.

Because Stories are accessed from a single point and can be easily skipped, this is less of a problem. But because those Stories are also organized in terms of chronology, that means the most recent Story will be the one that is at the front of the queue. Make sure that is yours!

Making Great Stories

Some great topics and opportunities to create Stories:

- Behind the scenes sneak peak
- On-tour, travelling, visiting nice locations
- Special events in store
- Flash sales
- Product launches
- Special announcements
- Interviews and Q&As
- Exclusive updates and scoops

Generally, the idea of a Story is to provide some additional content that feels a little more raw and less curated than what might appear on your main feed. This lets your audience feel as though they are getting to know you, which can help to build trust and therefore improve your sales.

Try to choose Story opportunities that will play to these strengths. But keep in mind that it never hurts to also include a little polish and sheen as well.

How to Use Stories

The key to success with Stories is to think of them not as a way to find more followers, or as a way to sell to those followers. Rather, Stories present a way to deepen your relationship with existing followers. This is in many ways even more important, and it's something that can make a huge difference for your business.

Stories alone cannot do this. Stories work in the context of a strong brand, great brand loyalty, and consistent high quality output. If you do those things, then Stories will provide another way for your followers to get behind a brand they already love.