

WEBINAR

The Anatomy of a High-Engagement Instagram Post

Webinar Preview & Audio Available at:
<https://www.foottraffik.co/webinars/marijuana-business-listings/>

Slide 1	The Anatomy of a High-Engagement Instagram Post <i>Learn What You Need to Score More Likes</i>
Slide 2	Today, we'll be covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The 5 essentials that all top-performing posts include• How to create saveable Instagram content• How to test content to see what works for your audience• Why and how to finetune your social media strategy
Slide 3	My name is Eduardo Silva. I'm the VP of Sales here at Foottraffik, and I'm really excited to be sharing this



The Anatomy of a High-Engagement Instagram Post

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	<p>information with you today.</p>
<p>Slide 4</p>	<p>Foottraffik is a digital advertising and analytics agency. We've been in business for over five years now, exclusively focused on dispensaries and delivery services within North America. We're really excited to be helping advance our industry forward.</p>
<p>Slide 5</p>	<p>A couple of housekeeping items before we get started.</p> <p>If you have your cell phones on you, please put them facing down on your desk or mute them. We are going to be covering a lot of information in a very short window of time and it helps to retain focus.</p> <p>Familiarize yourself with the Zoom interface. If you haven't become a master at Zoom yet, if you go to the bottom of your screen there is a Q&A button. We do have moderators with us today that will be addressing questions throughout the webinar</p>
<p>Slide 6</p>	<p>Instagram is still one of the five-most downloaded apps. This shouldn't be too surprising because 63% of Americans say they check their Instagram accounts every day.</p> <p>Since it was launched in 2010, the platform has acquired one billion monthly users with 140 million of them in the</p>



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US alone. Now, the US population is about 330 million, so that means that 42% of all Americans are scrolling their feeds, clicking through stories, and engaging with brands. Many of these users are millennials, but there are plenty of users across all demographics.

All of this to say, your target audience is on Instagram, and if you want to reach them, you should be there too.

Historically, social media has been hard for dispensaries and cannabis brands. We've seen accounts get suspended or shadowbanned left and right. This may make you question whether you should even bother with a social media strategy.

It's a valid concern. However, it's completely possible to create great content that doesn't violate the Instagram terms-of-service and engage with your target audience in a way that positively reflects on your brand and keeps you top-of-mind.

Instagram is a fun platform and your dispensary can have fun with it—or you can use it informationally to share educational cannabis content with your audience. It's up to you—but if you want to make it worth your while, you need to understand what works on Instagram, and what doesn't.

Before diving into what your posts need to get more engagement, let's talk about what not to do.

Slide 7

If you're concerned about your account getting shut down, make sure to check out our past webinar on the do's and don't of posting on Instagram. You can find all of



The Anatomy of a High-Engagement Instagram Post

<https://www.foottraffik.co/webinars/marijuana-business-listings/>

our previous webinars at foottraffik.me/webinars

Long story short, you cannot sell or imply that you sell cannabis or you will get shadowbanned or have your account disabled. Avoid posting prices or talking about selling cannabis. I know it's hard because it's literally what dispensaries do, but for Instagram, you need to focus on brand building instead of sales. This means focusing on lifestyle or educational content, rather than posting your deals.

A quick tip before we move on. Even if you follow all the rules, there's still a chance that Instagram will decide to disable your account. Having your account shut down or shadowbanned is pretty common for dispensaries.

Dispensaries can invest thousands of dollars building up their following and creating content only to have it stripped away. Make sure you have a backup account and that you're also getting people to sign up for your SMS and email lists. This will allow you to quickly rebuild your following.

Plus, you own your text and email lists so you can market to the people who have opted-in to them. You don't own your Instagram account—Instagram does. They can limit your access whenever they want. Make sure you preserve all of your hard work by saving your posts and maintaining a backup account.

Slide 8

Enough disclaimers, let's get on to the good stuff.

If you want to get your posts seen on Instagram, then you need to get more engagement. It's a bit of a catch-22,



The Anatomy of a High-Engagement Instagram Post

<https://www.foottraffik.co/webinars/marijuana-business-listings/>

right? You have to get your posts seen to get them seen by even more people.

That's thanks to Instagram's algorithm. And while it's confusing, it's also possible to work within it to reach more people and get your brand in front of them.

Instagram's algorithm takes into account how long people look at your posts, who is engaging with you, and what type of post it is. By that, I mean, if it's a meme or an educational post or some other type of content. The algorithm takes into account all of this info to decide who will see your posts and when.

So if some of your followers tend to engage more with meme-type posts and you post one, then Instagram is going to be more likely to show them that post because the platform aims to show them things they enjoy.

Maximizing your engagement will lead to your posts being shown to even more people. Every post you create should be viewed through this lens. Is it going to spark conversation with your target audience and grow your presence?

Slide 9

Let's talk about the five things that most high-engagement posts have in common. Up first, the image.

Instagram is a visual platform. It's all about the photos and pictures, right? It's the first thing that's going to catch someone's attention and get them to stop scrolling. If you want to create a high-engagement post, then you need to use imagery that captures your target audience's



attention.

Now, if you do a search on which types of images do best on Instagram, you're going to get conflicting information. This is probably because it's different for different brands and audiences.

Rather than focusing on what may or may not do best, you should experiment with your own brand imagery. Do you want to showcase what goes on behind the scenes of your dispensary? Share exciting product photos? Showcase exciting things in your area?

One type of photo that tends to do well across the board is user-submitted images. This is basically content that is made for you by one of your followers. When you post user-generated content, you're shouting out your audience and people like to see that and engage with those posts.

Not all of your followers are going to be Ansel Adams, and you aren't going to be able to feature every image that someone tags you in. If you're concerned about marrying your grid with user-generated content, use it in your stories. I promise it will make someone's day regardless of where you post it, and they may even reshare it to give you additional visibility.

Other than user- or brand-generated content, try to stick to your own images and avoid stock photography. We're going to cover how to measure what is and isn't working in a little bit so that you can measure which of your images or posts resonate most with your audience.



The Anatomy of a High-Engagement Instagram Post

<https://www.foottraffik.co/webinars/marijuana-business-listings/>

Slide 10

Great, your photo has captured someone's attention. Now what?

What do you want people to do when they see your post? Do you want them to leave a comment? Check out your bio? Save your post? Opt-in to your text or email list?

When creating the caption that follows your image, you need to be crystal clear about what you want to happen. Your CTA should align with your imagery and provide a source of connection with your audience—that's tip number two.

If you want to pop up more frequently in your follower's feeds, then you want to encourage them to comment on, save, or share your post.

Instagram weighs those interactions more heavily in their algorithm than when someone just simply likes your post. It's pretty easy to just touch that heart and keep scrolling.

By taking the time to engage with the post in different ways, then users are showing that they have found it useful or valuable. When they engage with your posts in that way, then your posts will show up more often for them, which leads to more engagement. It's a cycle.

Slide 11

Let's talk about hashtags, which is tip number 3. Some people love hashtags, some people hate hashtags. If you're a hater, get over it and start using them anyway.

Why? Because it's about building a community.

Instagram uses hashtags to categorize posts. People click on them and they can see the most popular posts using



those hashtags as well as the most recent posts. Followers can even choose to follow hashtags, so posts using those hashtags will show up right in their feeds.

You'll want to create a hashtag strategy and target particular hashtags that are relevant to your target audience. This may include local hashtags, brand specific hashtags, and popular tags

If you're not sure where to get started, here are a couple of ideas. First, you should have your own dispensary hashtag, which could be your name, and you should use industry and local hashtags that feature your city's name so that you'll show up for those. Think "hashtag San Francisco dispensary" or "hashtag mission district dispensary." Then expand from there. There are a ton to choose from: San Francisco life, San Francisco Love, San Francisco dogs, San Francisco Giants. Just make sure that you're using relevant hashtags so they don't feel too spammy.

Check what other dispensaries are using, check what your followers are using. Find the hashtags that are most in line with your brand and go to town.

You should also check out the hashtags that are popular with your followers and comment on posts using them. This helps build community and can introduce more people to your brand.

One easy way to do this is to follow relevant hashtags so posts using them show up in your feed. Then, you can easily comment on them while you're checking your account. Engaging with others will lead to more engagement on your own posts!

I want to point out the obvious for a moment: Not all



The Anatomy of a High-Engagement Instagram Post

<https://www.foottraffik.co/webinars/marijuana-business-listings/>

Slide 12

hashtags are created equally. Some can get you in trouble, so avoid hashtags that talk about selling weed, for example.

And another quick tip: You can make sure your hashtags are easy to read by capitalizing the first letter of every word. This makes them more accessible and identifiable.

Tip number four: consider the format.

If you want to generate more engagement, make sure you aren't just posting single photos. Switch things up!

Different types of content appeal to different people. If you want to reach everyone in your different target demographics, then make the most of all the tools available to you.

In addition to single photo posts, make sure you're creating carousels with multiple images, stories, and reels.

Carousels have one of the highest engagement rates, yet they aren't used as often. They are great for sharing a series of images or educational information. You can even add a video to a carousel. If you're going the educational route, you can create a carousel about myrcene, for example. You can use a little text in your images to explain why it's such a crucial terpene and show off some myrcene-rich products.

Because they disappear after 24 hours unless you save them, stories are great for sharing content that you don't want on your grid. You can showcase fun behind-the-scenes antics at your dispensary, show off the view from one of your budtender's hikes, or share the



Slide 13

amazing spread your team is about to dive into. You can also highlight your most recent grid post in your stories to draw attention to it.

Reels are short videos that have their own featured spot on the app, though you can post them to your grid or stories too. You have 15 seconds and additional editing tools to create something eye-catching. I know I've seen a lot of meme-like reels, and those seem to be pretty popular. I've even seen a dispensary do a dancing reel! Reels are a fun format, and because of how they're featured, they provide you with a good way to reach a larger audience.

Creating posts that aren't simple images takes time and a concerted strategy, which is what we're going to talk about next.

The fifth tip for creating a high-engagement post is to create a strategy.

You'll notice that many of the most popular posts are part of a strategy. They aren't just posted haphazardly. Rather, they have some kind of similarity to the other images on a user's feed.

Maybe they stick to a certain color story, maybe they only post product shots directly on a white background. Maybe every photo has a person being active in it. You get the drift.

To drive engagement, your strategy has to serve both your brand and your followers. This means that you can't just post the things that you want to post and be done



Slide 14

with it. You need to create posts that your followers want to see.

When you first get started, your strategy will likely be hit or miss. If you don't have data to work from, you can use our best practices to get started and then analyze what's working.

As you're creating your content, remember to ask that question I mentioned earlier: Is this going to spark conversation with my target audience and grow my Instagram presence?

We're going to go more in-depth into testing and amending your strategy in a moment, but first, I want to talk about another way that people interact with posts.

Following the five tips I covered should help you increase your Instagram engagement. If you want to take it up a notch, then you need to make sure you're also creating saveable posts.

Every Instagram post has a set of icons underneath it. The one that gets you the least amount of juice with the Instagram algorithm is the heart, or the like button. When people comment, share, or save your post, Instagram is more likely to share your post more widely with your followers.

The ability to save others posts is pretty cool. Basically, users can hit the bookmark icon and organize their favorite posts into their own little library that they can refer back to later.

They get to keep that info for another time, and you get



the visibility boost. So how do you take advantage of this?

If you have ever used this feature, think about what moved you to do so. Was it a really cool image? Some helpful info you wanted to be able to refer back to?

In most cases, the save feature is used when a post sparks a desire. Maybe an image was very inspiring and it gave you an idea that you wanted to remember. Maybe it showcased information in a way that you hadn't thought of before. Or maybe it was just so hilarious you needed to save it to look at it again when you needed a boost.

Those same motivations move your followers as well. If you want them to save your content, then you need to create a strategy that also results in that kind of powerful content.

Maybe that's terpene or cannabinoid infographics, or tips for troubleshooting a vape cartridge.

When brainstorming ideas for your strategy, keep in mind what type of content your audience is most likely to save. See what they've already saved from you, and think about how you can create similar content more regularly.

Slide 15

Great, you have a strategy under way, you're creating posts, some people are commenting. Now what?

Well, instead of just plugging ahead and generating post after post, you need to test what's working.

If you're not sure what's working or if certain types of posts are better for your audience, track your stats.



How many likes are you getting? How many comments? Which posts are performing well for the different stats?

Once you know what your customers want to engage with, you can create more posts like that. If you don't track, you'll end up posting blindly. This could slow your follower growth or just stall your engagement.

One way to identify what your followers like is to look at historical engagement. You can track Instagram engagement with a variety of tools. Which you choose should be determined by the features you want. Many of these tools serve as posting platforms as well, so they'll let you upload and schedule your posts and then provide you with analytics on them.

If you have an Instagram business account, you can also look at your analytics from the app itself.

Instagram provides data about your audience demographics, follower growth, when your followers are most active, the actions people are taking on your profile, how many people are seeing your posts, which types of posts are getting the most engagement, and what kinds of engagement your posts are getting.

Once you have this data, look for the posts with the most engagement and see if you can find what they have in common. Are they all the same type of post? Were they posted at a certain time? Did they have particularly strong CTAs?

Slide 16

Your analytics can be used to dial in your strategy. Once you are aware of what is and what isn't working, you can



begin to replicate your most successful posts at a larger scale. You can better determine when the right time to post for your audience is, the types of content they like most, if particular color schemes are more attractive to them, and on and on.

You may find that there are days where you get no engagement. Your posts just bomb. Guess what? Don't post on those days.

You don't have to continually churn out content. Rather, you need to regularly post. There's a difference.

Posting just to post is going to lead to some low-engagement posts, which could impact who sees your posts. Rather than falling prey to the algorithm, make sure your strategy is focused on specific days and times—then stick to those days and times. Even if it's just four times a week—that's better than posting every day with little engagement.

Your strategy should also include guidelines for when to check and update your analytics. This way you can keep fine-tuning your strategy.

It should also include making time for responding to comments and engaging on other people's posts. So let's say you post on Wednesday afternoon, then maybe you should spend the hour after your post goes live engaging with other people's posts. That way, when they click over to see who you are, they'll see your newest post. In terms of timing for replying to comments and messages, you should set time aside every day to check on your social media messages so that you are responding to them in a timely fashion.



The Anatomy of a High-Engagement Instagram Post

<https://www.foottraffik.co/webinars/marijuana-business-listings/>

Slide 17

Once you've fine-tuned your strategy, don't be afraid to make a change. You will need to keep evolving to avoid stagnation. Nothing is worse on social media than someone posting the same thing over and over.

In addition, the app is going to change over time. That's the only guarantee you have. Change is inevitable, and you need to be prepared to pivot and alter your strategy so make sure to keep tracking those important analytics so you can spot any dips that indicate it's time to change tack.

For example, when Instagram introduced Reels, they prioritized reel content on their discover tab. Users who created content using the reel feature were able to take advantage of that change to maximize their reach and score new followers.

If you want to take advantage of similar changes, stay up to date with Instagram. You can even follow their Instagram account, or you can use an RSS feed aggregator like Feedly to stay on top of any Instagram news so that you're able to make changes to your strategy quickly.

Basically, don't get too tied to your strategy. Remain flexible and be willing to change when you start noticing any drops in your analytics.

Too often, we make this emotional connection with the strategies we created and we fail to see when it's time to make a change. This can easily lead to failure. Rethinking is critical for continuing to create exciting content and providing new info and imagery for your audience. Don't be afraid to take an ax to strategy, chop it up, and rearrange it until you have something that works better



The Anatomy of a High-Engagement Instagram Post

<https://www.foottraffik.co/webinars/marijuana-business-listings/>

for your goals.

Slide 18

Questions?

- Do you have tips for encouraging more user-generated content?
 - If you want people to tag your brand, ask them to! Create a contest or give away loyalty points when people tag you in relevant images. You don't have to use them all, but people love to win or receive things and they will become brand ambassadors for you if you treat them well.
- Do you have examples of good CTAs for Instagram?
 - I've seen posts that tell people to save them before diving into really useful information. If you're providing something of value, it's more likely that they'll do so. If you like creating funny content, you can ask people to tag a friend who they think will enjoy your post or ask them to share the post with friends who will like it. This is great for increasing your followers and engagement.
- My account has already been shut down, are there any additional precautions I can take to make sure that it doesn't happen again?
 - Your bio should clearly state that your 21+ only. Never talk about selling things, prices, or deals. Don't show any cannabis consumption. Make sure that you are regularly providing your followers with the opportunity to opt-in to your email or text list so that you can market to them off the



platform and provide them deals that way.

Slide 19

Remember—Instagram is not for selling your cannabis products! If you're interested in driving more traffic to your website with ads or SEO, then schedule a call with me. Otherwise, protect your Instagram account and keep posting great content.

Thanks so much for joining us today. For sticking with us, you've qualified for your free yeti tumbler.

Let's get your shipping information and get one of those to you quickly. Schedule a call at [foottraffik.me/call](https://www.foottraffik.me/call)



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