

Instagram success, what business can learn from Khaya Dlanga

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It's visual, emotive, social, and addictive. It also lives up to the adage, "A picture tells a thousand words!"

Instagram is currently one of the fastest growing social media sites worldwide, increasing its active user base by 23% in the last few months according to GlobalWebIndex.



Khaya Dlanga

The increasing growth of Instagram doesn't surprise active user, Khaya Dlanga, Senior Communications Manager of Creative Excellence and Digital at Coca Cola. Khaya says he does not recall precisely how he joined Instagram, but remembers reading an article about it being more social than Flickr. He joined Instagram and has not looked back.

"I'm on Instagram now and I post what I like. Eat your heart out Steve Biko. (*This is how spontaneously I post; I will go and post a "I post what I like" picture just now. Hold on a second while I do it.*)" He did, check his Instagram.

Overall though, Instagram is behind by numbers when compared to the likes of Facebook, YouTube, Google+, Twitter and even LinkedIn.

The meteoric rise of Instagram in South Africa is right now.

Investing in Instagram

The SA Social Media Landscape 2014 research study concluded by World Wide Worx reveals that just over half of marketers surveyed will increase their Social Network spend next year. 67% of these marketers intend to invest on Instagram in 2015. This is an increase by a staggering 32% from the previous year.

The same Marketers, with optimistic expansion plans on Instagram admit that management buy-in, skills shortage, and budget are the biggest deterrent to moving swiftly into the Social Network space, and of course, Instagram.

There is a huge gap in skills and readily available success case studies to benchmark against. Many admit that they have already set up Instagram accounts. After all, barrier to entry is low. But these accounts are not yielding any results.

Instagram is "extremely foreign" says one such marketer, "We are on Instagram, contributing to the daily conversation but no one cares to hear what we have to say."

Finding a social angle

Instagram sensation, author and former Head Mentor of Future Leaders Khaya Dlanga, insists that Social Networks, should be social and businesses must find a social angle when they are on Instagram



"I rarely use Instagram for work, but sometimes I do. When I do use it for business, it's relaxed. It's a combination of who I am. I can be funny and random. For example, I will take a line from famous South African songs and write a "funny" thesis about the line - it's a new approach and it's fun. My Instagram is definitely social. Sometimes I post Bible verses. Or I might tell a story, like when I fell asleep while I was sitting right next to Thabo Mbeki and he was speaking.

Luckily, I never drooled on him."

The South African solution for organisations struggling to gain traction on Instagram may be to look no further than what is available as a benchmark. And what we have available are private "home bred" Instagram accounts doing better than business "home bred" Instagram accounts.

Lessons can be borrowed from individuals like brand personality Craig Howes, who has the hearts of over 172,000 followers on Instagram without the benefit of large corporate budgets. Yet engaging!

The human side to brands

Khaya, believes that the only role to be played on Instagram is an authentic account of who you are, as an organisation or even as a person

"I can be serious, funny, quirky.... I can share travel pictures. There isn't one thing you will find; I can be all these things. Don't be cold and disconnected from who you are. People have to get your essence even when you are promoting yourself. You can promote yourself but don't come across as an ass. Promote your business but be interesting about it."

By mid-October Khaya Dlanga had 1229 posts on Instagram, with over 20,000 followers, and he followed 963 people. Of the 1229 posts, only about 24% had his face personally. Less than 30% of his personal Instagram photos were about him directly. On evaluation, his Instagram account had excellent engagement.

"You have to go to where the people are; you must bring the human side of the brand to life. It's really that simple. Social Networks are about people; make your brand human there" he concludes.

ABOUT ZIMASEKA NJOMI

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