



SOCIAL MEDIA

**SUPER
POWER**

22 Social Media Super Heroes Reveal How To
Sell, Serve, And Succeed Using Visual Marketing
On Pinterest, Instagram, and Youtube

BY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
Jason G. Miles

Social Media Super Power

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This brief eBook contains excerpts from [Pinterest Power](#), [Instagram Power](#) and [Youtube Marketing Power](#) and represents less than 10% of those books' content. Distributed under agreement with the Publisher.

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Introduction by Jason G. Miles

Dear reader,

I've been incredibly honored to publish three best-selling books with McGraw Hill. As part of those writing projects – I interviewed an amazing collection of social media marketers. For each book I tried to find marketers that were taking full advantage of the power of Pinterest, Instagram and Youtube.

When I discovered that McGraw Hill allowed me to give away an Excerpt from each book – I tried to think about what might be most valuable – and these interviews immediately came to my mind.

In Social Media Super Power I've combined the "free excerpt" from all three books. I hope you enjoy them.

Learn more about my book resources on [my Amazon author page](#) and follow my blog at www.makesellgrow.com.

All the very best,

Jason G. Miles

Introduction To The [Pinterest Power](#) Interviews

We had no idea how Pinterest could help our business in the summer of 2011 and then began learning how to do Pinterest Marketing. This book was a result of our lessons.

We also wanted to find and interview the very best Pinterest marketers. We've included the interviews from:

- The Pinterest Team
- The BurdaStyle Team
- The Modcloth Team
- Courtney Slazinik from Click-it-up-a-notch
- Dana Willard from MADE
- Ashley Hackshaw from Lil Blue Boo
- Liz Marie from Liz Marie Blog
- Jake Johnson from Mars Hill
- Josephine Kimberling
- Roberta Isleib

So without further interruption, here are the interviews as originally conducted.

Jason Miles & Karen Lacey
Authors of *Pinterest Power*

The Pinterest Team Interview

About The Interview: Our biggest ‘stretch goal’ for the *Pinterest Power* book was to get an interview with the Pinterest team, but we weren’t sure it would work out. We worked through their PR Firm, and took our best shot. We knew it would add a lot of value to the book.

Although our original request, for an in-person interview, ideally with co-founder Ben Silberman or Evan Sharp, was declined, the team did agree to answer questions via email and let us know we should attribute the answers to ‘Pinterest’ or ‘A Pinterest Spokesperson’, not to any specific person. So we set about trying to ask the questions we thought readers would want to hear first hand and finalized the correspondence May 28, 2012.

Q - Pinterest has seen phenomenal growth and many marketers are evaluating how best to use the site. Is there a specific message or word of encouragement you’d like to share with them as they prepare to bring marketing campaigns to life on Pinterest?

A - Pinterest lets people organize and share the things they love, including their inspirations or concrete ideas for many offline activities and events. We think there are a lot of opportunities to learn more about what people are searching for or interested in and it's an exciting time for brands to dip in and familiarize themselves with the new

dynamics of discovery, sharing, and self-expression we're trying to build.

Q - There is an enormous range of marketing behaviors that could occur on Pinterest, some evil, like spam, some less evil like contests, and some very simple like branding strategies. Is there an ideal “use case” marketers can adopt that you’d affirm? Is there any specific tactic, besides the obvious spam issues, that you’d say is less desirable?

A - For brands, pinning can be a great way to highlight aspects of your brand that may not come to mind at first when people consider your brand or company. As we state in our [brand guidelines](#), as simple as it sounds, best practices for using Pinterest for brand purposes center around pinning like a regular user.

Most importantly, this includes:

- Pinning from various sources rather than one specific site.
- Repinning from within the site to engage with others - repinning is one of the most social activities on Pinterest and it's how any user really builds his/her network of followers.
- Creating at least a few boards that cover a broad range of interests, rather than maintaining a single board devoted to one topic

Q - We write about conducting contests on Pinterest in the book and include examples of nicely designed contests, such as the recent Pottery Barn Teens contest and the Modcloth contest. What’s Pinterest’s perspective on contests being conducted on the platform? Will it be a viable marketing option for the long-term, or is Pinterest

considering going the way of Facebook & Google+ and banning them?

A - Pinterest is a growing service and company, so product-changes and emerging policies will definitely influence marketers or promotions in the future. However, staying aligned with our Pin Etiquette will probably always inform a "nicely designed" contest on Pinterest.

For instance, a contest that asks entrants to engage in genuine user-activities - like creating a board filled with things that inspire them, centered around a theme - are probably more memorable and fun for Pinner's compared to contests which simply ask people to comment or repin within a certain amount of time.

Q - We write about spam in the book and Pinterest's advice and feedback on the issues, (as outlined in your help forum), is there anything further you'd like to say on that topic to reassure the user community?

A - As a growing service, Pinterest is not immune to challenges faced by sites across the web, including spam. However, it is a tremendous priority for us to quickly address them. Our engineers are actively working to manage issues as they arise. We are revisiting the nature of public feeds on the site to make it harder for fake or harmful content to get into them and have put tools in place to detect suspicious activity like automated following and commenting.

Q - We write about best practices for copyright issues in the book. Is there any additional advice you'd give for marketers, especially small businesses, related to this issue?

A - The best advice can be found in our [Pin Etiquette](#) around crediting your sources:

Credit Your Sources

Pins are the most useful when they have links back to the original source. If you notice that a pin is not sourced correctly, leave a comment so the original pinner can update the source. Finding the original source is always preferable to a secondary source such as Image Search or a blog entry.

The BurdaStyle Interview

About BurdaStyle: BurdaStyle is a DIY fashion and sewing community. Their aim is to bring the craft of sewing to a new generation of fashion designers, hobbyists, DIY'ers, and inspire fashion enthusiasts. They offer downloadable PDF sewing patterns, project ideas, tutorials and a community passionate about fashion.

In September of 2012 www.burdastyle.com received over 81,000 unique visitors. They have over 27,000 Facebook Likes, and over 2,700 followers on Pinterest. Here are links to their sites:

<http://www.burdastyle.com/>

<http://www.facebook.com/BurdaStyleSews>

<http://Pinterest.com/burdastyle/>

Q - How did you discover Pinterest, and what were your first experiences like?

A - BurdaStyle first discovered Pinterest by word of mouth. One of our co-founders had heard of the site and felt it would be a beneficial social network to work with. When BurdaStyle first set up an account with Pinterest we were unsure of how to use the site to our advantage, our first experiences felt frantic. We were used to using Facebook and Twitter, networks that operate quite differently and we had to adjust or rather broaden our perspective of Social Networking.

Q - What specific steps have you taken to boost your Pinterest traffic?

A - We have been using Pinterest for nearly a year now and are continuing to explore the site and adjusting our use to increase its value to our business. Over the past year we have seen varying levels of site referrals from week to week but overall we have seen a significant increase in BurdaStyle activity on Pinterest as well as an increase in site referrals.

As we observe activity on Pinterest - who is Liking our Pins? Which pins are being Liked and Repinned the most? What time of day do our Pins get the most attention? - we are continuing to learn how to best take advantage of the network. During our first experiences on the site we were pinning as frantically as we felt and once we slowed down and became more selective with our pinning we found an increase in attention. We began to realize where our Pinterest audience's interests lie and began to more carefully curate our boards based on these interests, focusing on quality and the personality of our brand.

It has proven invaluable when pinning BS projects and patterns to pin directly from BurdaStyle so we are able to better track our activity and increase our hits on the site.

Q - What 'aha' moments have you experienced where you realized you could do something differently/better to boost Pinterest traffic?

A - We experienced an 'aha' moment when we realized we could further develop BurdaStyle's personality through Pinterest, moving beyond Projects and Patterns to include beautiful fabrics, books, and all things inspirational: people, images, designs, etc.

Q - What results or successes have you achieved because of Pinterest?

A - Our site referrals from Pinterest are increasing and we are beginning to see an increase in sales directly related to our traffic from Pinterest.

Q - If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with Pinterest, what advice would you give them?

A - Pinterest allows us to collect and share what inspires by simply posting (pinning) images. A well curated board can be nothing less than exciting, so do just that - pin what excites you.

Q - If you were sitting down with an experienced Pinterest user, what advice and/or questions would you have for them?

A - I would ask how to write a better description of my pins in order to increase activity through search results.

Q - What are the biggest mistakes you've made using Pinterest that we can help folks avoid?

A - Our biggest mistake was not taking advantage of the site when we first signed on.

The ModCloth Interview

About Modcloth: ModCloth is democratizing fashion one indie, vintage, and retro-inspired style at a time! The fashionable fun of vintage clothing and modern designs is always in season on their site. ModCloth provides an exciting and engaging online shopping experience for everyone in search of cute clothing designed with vintage fashion flair.

In September of 2012 www.modcloth.com received over 757,000 unique visitors. They have over 682,000 Facebook Likes, and over 1.2 million followers on Pinterest. Here are links to their sites:

<http://www.modcloth.com/>

<http://Pinterest.com/modcloth/pins/>

<http://www.facebook.com/ModCloth>

Q - How did you discover Pinterest, and what were your first experiences like?

A - Our fans brought Pinterest to our attention. We first noticed Pinterest due to the amount of traffic coming from Pinterest to ModCloth.com. It is a platform that our core demographic loves. According to Pinterest, their users are 54% female and the greatest age demographic is 18-34 y/o. Also, We found that the type of content that resonates

on Pinterest, is also the type of editorial content that we generate on our blog, such as DIY, fashion, and food. We had a great demographic and psychographic match!

In the Fall of 2011, we launched our Pinterest brand account, and our fans quickly found us there. The brand page followers grew at an exponential rate.

Q - When and how did you see the value of Pinterest for your business?

A - Pinterest competes with Facebook as one of our top unpaid referral sites, as far as traffic and revenue. As Pinterest climbed the ranks in our referral sources, we saw it's intrinsic value as a traffic generation tool.

Q - What specific steps have you taken to boost your Pinterest traffic?

A - In early 2012, we held out first Pinterest contest, "Something ModCloth, Something You"...

(<http://blog.modcloth.com/2012/02/10/the-winner-of-something-modcloth-something-you-our-contest-on-Pinterest/>) ...

where we encouraged fans to create a wedding inspiration board which included ModCloth products. The winner received a gift card, along with the recognition of having their inspiration board turned into stylebook images

(<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150710337892171.420353.9481787170&type=3>).

Onsite optimization is also a key factor in increasing Pinterest traffic. Fans can easily extract our images from our site. We've also added the Pin It Button to each product page and the ModCloth blog.

Q - If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with Pinterest, what advice would you give them?

A - Succeeding on Pinterest, and Social Media, starts with your product and site. To motivate users to share your content on visual discovery platforms, your content has to be visually appealing and easy to share image files.

Building a Pinterest brand page and adding Pinterest buttons to your site, will encourage your community to pin your site images and also keep you top of mind when they are participating on the platform.

Q - If you were sitting down with an experienced Pinterest user, what advice and/or questions would you have for them?

A - Gain access to Pinterest Analytics tools, including [Pintics](#), [Pinpuff](#) (similar to Klout), Pinerly, Pinreach and [Curalate](#). These tools monitor our overall health on Pinterest, along with the performance of our brand page.

Q - If you've used Pinterest for your business, how much has it increased sales, brand recognition, and the overall success of your business?

A - Last week a customer said that they loved seeing ModCloth get so much attention on Pinterest but was disappointed those products were now quickly selling out.

Visual discovery sites are generating traffic and revenue! Since we launched our Pinterest brand page in Fall of 2011, we've seen traffic from the site grow by 1000%. In the last 30 days alone, we've had 140,000 items pinned from our site, which amplified to 270,000 Repins (data from Curalate).

Q - Can you distill your Pinterest experience down into several key tips for readers?

A - The majority of traffic we receive from Pinterest is user-generated, meaning our customer is pinning images from our website. Brands that prioritize publishing

interesting photography and graphics that delight the Pinterest demographic base, will see their content organically thrive on the platform.

Due to the rise of visual discovery, highly pin-able products on site, and a demographic that loves social media, we have the perfect recipe for Pinterest success.

Q - Can you tell us what type of quantifiable results you got from the contest?

A - The quantifiable results from the contest were participation, new followers, increased traffic from Pinterest, and customer sentiment. Through the contest, we gained thousands of new followers. We had a total of 600 entries. The new followers were a mix of existing customer on Pinterest, customers we introduced to Pinterest, and new customers that discovered us through the contest. Since more ModCloth items were being pinned, we also saw a bump in referral traffic from Pinterest. Overall, our customers loved the contest, and the fact we were so engaged with this platform.

Our second contest lets our customers share the clothing, decor, and items related to their dream job. After that, we're excited to hold our first scavenger hunt within our boards.

Q - Do you have any advice for someone running a contest for the first time through Pinterest?

A - When creating a contest for any social media platform, it's important to understand the natural behaviors of the site's members. We intuitively saw that weddings and aspirational wedding boards resonated with the Pinterest audience, so we chose to reward that behavior in the context of ModCloth.

Unlike Twitter and Facebook, Pinterest does not yet have contest applications. So the process of collecting entries is manual, if you choose to keep the contest flow within Pinterest. Some companies have opted to use on-site sign up forms, that allow users to submit their entry URL. We prefer to let users submit their board publically to optimize the virality of the event.

The Click-It-Up-A-Notch Interview With Courtney Slazinik

About Click-It-Up-A-Notch: At click-it-up-a-notch you'll find tips to improve your photos one click at a time. You'll learn how to shoot in manual mode, edit and use natural light and composition to improve your photos.

In September of 2012 www.clickitupanotch.com received over 8,700 unique visitors. They have over 6,700 Facebook Likes, and over 3,300 followers on Pinterest. Here are links to their sites:

<http://www.clickitupanotch.com/>

<http://pinterest.com/clickitupanotch/>

<http://www.facebook.com/clickitup>

Q - How did you discover Pinterest, and what were your first experiences like?

A - In 2011, several friends were talking about this "virtual bulletin board". I rolled my eyes thinking, I do not have time for one more time sucker and social media outlet. However, after some convincing, I decided to check out this new Pinterest. I fell in love at first sight and probably sat for over 2 hours checking out all the pins. This site was amazing. I loved finding ideas for my home, activities for my kids, and my favorite, photography tips, tutorials, and inspiration.

Q - When and how did you see the value of Pinterest for your business?

A - April 2011, I read an article about finding out if your site had been pinned on Pinterest by going to www.Pinterest/source/yourwebsite.com I may have been slightly obsessed with checking that site to see if any of my posts had been pinned. I was amazed as I watched new posts being pinned daily. I loved being able to read the comments and titles people were leaving on the pin as well. I quickly came to realize that Pinterest could be a huge source of traffic for my blog.

However, when I decided to take the whole month of November 2011 off for a vacation, the impact Pinterest can have on a blog truly hit me. I didn't put up a single post from the end of October to almost the end of November. Since I knew my numbers would drop from my lack of posting, I didn't even check my statistics. When I finally started to post again at the end of November, I checked my stats and was floored when I saw I had more hits in November than any other month when I was posting. What was my number one source of traffic? Pinterest. Not only were people finding my posts on Pinterest, but they were coming to my blog to read them, as well as, becoming followers. Pinterest was my new best friend.

Q - What specific steps have you taken to boost your Pinterest traffic?

A - After looking at what posts were the most popular on Pinterest, I tried to make sure I wrote a “pinnable” post at least once a week. I have found that list posts, how-tos, and tutorials are some of the most popular posts of mine that have been pinned.

I also now create a “pinnable” button for posts I think will likely be pinned on Pinterest. I include a picture from the post, as well as, the title and my website on this button. Previously I only included my watermark which had the title of my post but recently have started to put my .com on there as well. Let’s be honest, sometimes things get pinned incorrectly or links are broken. I want to make it as easy as possible for people to see a pin of mine and find my site.

I also try to make sure that my “pinnable” image sticks with my brand. I chose the same colors and font as my blog. I even put my “umbrella girl” logo in front of my web address. I would like to believe that someone will see my logo and web address and think “I love that site! I must check out this pin.” A girl can dream!

Q - What ‘aha’ moments have you experienced where you realized you could do something differently/better to boost Pinterest traffic.

A - When I started to create “pinnable” buttons, I noticed that more of my posts were being pinned and were being pinned with the button I had created with the purpose of

looking attractive and enticing to a viewer. I wanted them to not only repin the pin but click through to read the post.

I also found out about a plug-in “Pin it on Pinterest” that allowed me to insert a “pin it” button at the bottom of my blog. I was able to pick the image that was pinned and the wording that would go with it. Not everyone uses this option, but a lot of people do. I know, I love it when a site has a button, with the image and text already spelled out for me. Who doesn’t want to save time?

Q - What results or successes have you achieved because of Pinterest?

A - Pinterest is the second highest source of traffic for my blog. In November 2011, I took the majority of the month off for a vacation. I didn’t post or check my stats. At the end of the month when I started to post again, I found that Pinterest had been my number one source and I had more hits in November than in any of my previous months. Maybe I just need to stop posting. Ha! People were finding my posts on Pinterest and clicking through to read my information.

I get an email almost weekly from someone letting me know they found me through Pinterest. What a wonderful source of traffic!

I have several posts that have been pinned over 1,000 times and one that has been pinned 16,000. I expect that number to increase since it is a seasonal post. People love ideas around the holidays.

Q - If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with Pinterest, what advice would you give them?

A - Take the time to make your posts “pinnable”. Create a “pinnable” button for your posts. Yes, it may take an extra 10-30 minutes but it will encourage your readers to pin your posts. Add a “pin it” button to the bottom of your post. It is like a small call to action. Your reader may love your post and see that “pin it” button and think “Yes, I do want to pin this.” Make sure your site is on your pinnable button.

Add your website to your profile. You may get followers who aren’t currently friends and they want to know more about you and what you do. Use this option to link to your site, Facebook, and/or Twitter.

Create lovely images. Pinterest is covered with beautiful images. You want yours to fit in.

In order for someone to “pin” something from your post there must be an image or video in the post.

Write pinnable content. Not everything you write is going to be popular on Pinterest. Try to write something once a week that would be successful on Pinterest. I have found the following to be the most successful on Pinterest:

- Lists
- How to
- DIY
- Recipes
- Before/after

- Kids activities
- Home ideas

Q - If you were sitting down with an experienced Pinterest user, what advice and/or questions would you have for them?

A - Do you pin your own posts? I have read mixed reviews and I have pinned a post here or there but do not do it on a regular basis. I wonder if pinning your own work is successful or annoying to your followers.

Q - What's your success story with Pinterest? How has it changed your life and/or business for the better?

A - Once I figured out the power of Pinterest I have changed some of the ways I blog. I now spend the extra time to create a "pinnable" button with the title of the post, picture, and/or website on it. This makes it easier for this image to be repinned once pinned. Yes, it takes extra time but I have seen great success in taking the extra time to make this button.

I try to write something that is "pinnable" at least once a week. Typically these are "list posts" or "how tos". People like posts with 8 ideas to... 10 ways to improve your... as the titles.

Q - What are the biggest mistakes you've made using Pinterest that we can help folks avoid?

A - Not adding "pinnable" images to my posts when I realized how much a traffic source Pinterest is. I have so many posts to go back through to create these buttons. Most of these posts have been pinned already and I have to just hope someone wrote the title of the post in the comment section, instead of something like "cool".

Additional information on creating pinnable buttons/images:

I kind of made up the word "pinnable button/image". Not that I created the idea but basically I use Photoshop Elements to create an image/button that is attractive and increases its chances of being pinned as well as putting my own title on it.

I take an image from the post, add the title and my website as well as a border. Then I insert it into the top of my post and select it as my image for my "pin it" button.

Here are some links to some posts with "pinnable" buttons on them:

<http://www.clickitupanotch.com/2010/09/rule-of-thirds/>

<http://www.clickitupanotch.com/2012/04/photo-albums-what-to-do-with-all-those-photos-part-2/>

<http://www.clickitupanotch.com/2012/03/everything-you-want-to-know-about-camera-lenses-part-3-our-favorite-lenses/>

As you can see I try to keep my branding the same through all the images so when people see it they think of my site.

Some of the buttons are very similar as you can tell. I just switched out the photo and title. I have read that taller images are more likely to be pinned so I am taking that into consideration when I make my buttons now.

The MADE Interview with Dana Willard

About MADE, (aka Danamadeit.com): Dana authors the popular DIY sewing, design, and photography blog--[MADE](http://www.danamadeit.com). Her designs have been featured in multiple sewing books, print magazines, and online creative sites. Her first book, [Fabrics A to Z](#), recently published and outlines everything you'll ever need to know about fabric. She lives in the hot city of Austin, TX with her husband and three kids.

In September of 2012 www.danamadeit.com received over 34,000 unique visitors. They have over 14,000 Facebook Likes, and over 20,000 followers on Pinterest. Here are links to their sites:

<http://www.danamadeit.com/>

<http://pinterest.com/danawillard/>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/MADE-page/166896896674287>

Q – How Did You Get Started In Pinterest?

A - Okay, so I decided to just free-write my thoughts and experience with Pinterest, rather than the individual questions because it was easier for me to sort it all out. I'm more of a blogger who gains increased blog traffic from people pinning my stuff, rather than a Pinterest user who's trying to increase their Pinterest traffic (if that makes sense).

When I first noticed blogging friends using phrases like, “I pinned this” or “I found this on Pinterest” I felt totally behind the curve. What was this new Pinterest site, how did

everyone else know about it already, and why would I need it when I already had a blog?

In a strange way, I didn't want to join cause it felt like I'd just be jumping on the bandwagon. And in another strange way, I felt threatened by the site. As a design/DIY blogger I often shared roundup posts on my site, or I would bookmark ideas on my computer that I was inspired by....stuff that I might create my own spin on and share down the road. So I didn't want to "show my hand" by pinning things on a board for everyone to see. I wanted them to come to my blog for that!

But one day as I was creating a 4th of July roundup post, I decided to just jump on Pinterest to see what kind of images might surface. I typed "red, white, blue" in the search box and wow....I was was blown away by the cool photos that popped up (a huge improvement over doing a google image search). I realized that many Pinterest users were pinning the exact things I was into....pretty pictures, yummy recipes, cool photos, and design ideas. I was hooked. It was too easy! And so visually appealing. So I found an invite email buried deep in my inbox and signed up for an account (annoyed by the fact that they required access to my facebook account but by this point I just wanted in.)

Q – Did you immediately 'get' Pinterest?

A - It took a while to get my boards set-up and to figure out my groove on the site. But

those first few months I was easily sucked in to pinning, organizing, learning the etiquette of repining, and ooohing and ahhhhing over the cool things other people were pinning. Over time I realized new things about Pinterest...

1. It wasn't a time waster (as some people might claim) but rather, it helped me organize the visual thoughts in my head. Looking at my board titled "home" I started to formulate what my style was, what architecture I liked, what finishing touches I was drawn to.

2. It didn't threaten my blog, but was actually wonderful for it. People were trickling over from Pinterest to my site and over time, Pinterest has become one of my top traffic sources. The more people pinning my projects; the more traffic that comes my way.

So Pinterest started changing the way I thought about my blog posts and how I designed the look of them. I noticed that vertical photos showed up larger in Pinterest, rather than horizontal ones. So when formatting a post on my blog, I made sure to always include a good strong vertical photo; one that hopefully people would pin.

I also started checking-in with Pinterest each day to see which particular photos from my site were being pinned. This helped me understand which photos people thought represented my projects and posts....which one photo really captured the project visually. This has helped me think more about the way I photograph and write blog

posts.

Bottom line: instead of fighting the idea of Pinterest, I embraced it. I think of it now as a compliment to my blog. It's a place for people to follow my design inspiration and styles, while my blog is where they get the DIY ideas and tutorials.

I absolutely love using Pinterest and in a way, Pinterest uses me. I love seeing my projects pinned and repinned. It makes me happy to know that Pinterest sort of creates free marketing for my blog. By making it possible for people to pin my stuff, new visitors end up at my site. And the more visitors that come, the more advertising money I make from the ads that run on my blog. It's a win-win situation for everyone.

Q - How much traffic have you seen come to your blog from Pinterest? (Do you use Google Analytics?)

A - Yes, I use Google Analytics, and Pinterest is always my #1 or #2 source for referral traffic. I'd say I get anywhere from 2,000-3,000 hits a day from Pinterest...and mobile Pinterest.

Q - How many of your blog images have been pinned on Pinterest?

A - Oh man, no idea how to find that out. Hundreds every day?

Q - How many total repins have you achieved? (You can find this on Pin Reach, a free service that tracks your Pinterest activity. <http://www.pinreach.com/>)

A - 166,717

Q - Can you quantify or guestimate how much your business has increased because of Pinterest?

A - Prob 1/10 or 1/8 of my blog traffic comes from Pinterest. Even on days that I don't post on my blog, I still get traffic from Pinterest from people searching for projects or hopping over from a picture.

Q - How does Pinterest stack up compared to your other social media outlets? (Like Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

A - FAR outweighs the traffic from other social media. And from my standpoint is far more creatively interesting. I can spend an hour on Pinterest pinning away pictures, design ideas, and recipes. I love how pretty everything looks in a board. But Facebook? Eh. I'll post a link to the latest blog post and that it's. It's pretty boring (and boring looking)

The Lil Boo Blue Interview

With Ashley Hackshaw

About LilBlueBoo.com: Lil Blue Boo is all about encouraging others to find their creative streak. Founded by Ashley Hackshaw in 2009, what began as a place for Ashley to share craft projects with friends and family quickly grew into a popular DIY and Lifestyle Blog, sewing pattern and clothing line, and most recently a community forum.

In September of 2012 www.lilblueboo.com received over 40,000 unique visitors. They have over 29,000 Facebook Likes, and over 15,000 followers on Pinterest. Here are links to their sites:

<http://www.lilblueboo.com/>

<http://pinterest.com/LilBlueBoo/>

<http://www.facebook.com/LilBlueBoo>

Q - How did you discover Pinterest, and what were your first experiences like?

A - I stumbled upon Pinterest after seeing someone mention it on Facebook. It was in its very early stages and all the photos were so beautiful I just couldn't resist! It slowly became addictive and I found I was on the site into the wee hours of the night.

Q - When and how did you see the value of Pinterest for your business?

A - At first Pinterest was just a source of inspiration and ideas. The first board I created was a style wishlist....clothing. Then I began to pin my own DIY ideas and the repining started to take off and began driving a large amount of traffic to my website.

Q - What specific steps have you taken to boost your Pinterest traffic?

A - I love sharing specific boards through Facebook. One of the most popular collections I posted was cute photos of baby animals. It had nothing to do with my business but readers just enjoyed browsing through the photos.

Q - What 'aha' moments have you experienced where you realized you could do something differently/better to boost Pinterest traffic?

A - At one point I realized I could use Pinreach.com's analytics to see which were my most popular pins. I also began to periodically check www.pinterest.com/source/yourdomain.com to see how many times my website had been pinned by others. This is valuable information because it shows what kind of information appeals to readers most and which current posts I should be promoting more.

Q - What results or successes have you achieved because of Pinterest?

A - A tremendous amount of traffic has been generated from Pinterest.

Q - If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with Pinterest, what advice would you give them?

A - Make sure to pin the direct link to a post...not to the basic blog URL....otherwise as time passes no one will be able to find the original pin without scrolling through the entire post history!

Q - If you were sitting down with an experienced Pinterest user, what advice and/or questions would you have for them?

A - Make sure to dissect your analytics! Which boards are people following? Make sure to find a way to pin more to those boards so they'll see the pins.

Q - What's your success story with Pinterest? How has it changed your life and/or business for the better?

A - 10% of our traffic comes from Pinterest.....and a large percent of them are new readers. It's a great way to get people to stumble across your website who otherwise might have never found you.

Q - If you've used Pinterest for your business, how much has it increased sales, brand recognition, and the overall success of your business?

A - Increased traffic = increased business.

Q - What are the biggest mistakes you've made using Pinterest that we can help folks avoid?

A - A few things:

1. Not anticipating the wide variety of boards I might need from the very beginning.

Some followers only follow specific boards and they might have followed more if I'd had them available from the first day.

2. A few times we've had to change a URL on a post that has already been repinned multiple times.....and then the Pinterest link becomes bad.

3. It's easy to get wrapped up in the beautiful photos. The most popular items are repinned over and over and then you begin to see numerous regurgitated projects showing up. It's a good idea to limit your time on Pinterest to keep your ideas and inspiration fresh!

Q - What are some of the most important techniques or tools you've discovered to help you grow your business with Pinterest?

A - I create photo collages for my blog with catchy titles incorporated. It becomes the image that readers of my website are most likely to pin and it's more visually appealing on Pinterest.

Q - Can you distill your Pinterest experience down into several key tips for readers?

A - Categorize your items well from the very beginning.

Make sure to pin actual "post" links and not the main blog website URL. Look elsewhere for inspiration besides Pinterest!

Q - Can you provide some idea of the size of traffic you receive from Pinterest?

A - We get about 20,000 unique visitors a month from Pinterest, and about 100,000 related page views.

To date I've had over 31,000 repins.

My most popular pins have been the following:

The Dishtowel Skirt <http://www.lilblueboo.com/2012/03/the-dishtowel-skirt-a-tutorial.html>

The Sock Bunny Tutorial <http://www.lilblueboo.com/2012/03/the-dishtowel-skirt-a-tutorial.html>

Just this year to date, traffic from other people pinning from my page has resulted in over 17,000 visitors to my glowstick lanterns and 13,000 visitors to my vintage sign tutorial. Those two went viral but I'm not sure how many times they've been pinned.

<http://www.lilblueboo.com/2011/07/glow-stick-lanterns.html>

<http://www.lilblueboo.com/2010/06/vintage-sign-using-canvas-tutorial.html>

Q - How does Pinterest compare to your other social media efforts?

A - Pinterest brings about 10% of our traffic and Facebook brings around 18%. All other traffic is direct or from a search engine.

Q - Are there specific success story images we can include?

A - The glow stick lanterns seemed to go viral and it gets pinned all year round.

The Liz Marie Galvan Interview

About LizMarieBlog.com: Readers of Liz Marie Blog enjoy all things lovely from beauty products, fashion, DIY, & interior design. Readers enjoy antique/vintage finds, DIY projects, furniture makeovers, & so much more, They are a Crafty bunch & enjoy handmade loveliness and anything fabulous!

In September of 2012 www.lizmarieblog.com received over 5,000 unique visitors. They have over 4,800 Facebook Likes, and over 5,400 followers on Pinterest. Here are links to their sites:

<http://www.lizmarieblog.com/>

<http://www.facebook.com/LizMarieBlog>

<http://pinterest.com/lizmariegalvan/>

Q - Most importantly, do we call you Liz or Liz Marie? (I hate calling people by the wrong name.:))

A - Liz works for me, but Liz Marie is great too because people associate me with my blog that way. Honestly either way. Thanks for asking :)

Q - How did you discover Pinterest, and what were your first experiences like?

A - My discovery of Pinterest is actually kind of funny. When I first started blogging, I would check my stats daily and see where people were coming from and I kept seeing

people coming from this site called Pinterest. I had no idea what Pinterest was and I clicked on it & was so confused by what it actually was and never went back.

Then a few weeks later one of my friends asked if I heard of this website called Pinterest & told me how amazing it was. I gave it another look & once I learned how to work it, I fell in love, and my life has not been the same since.

Q - When and how did you see the value of Pinterest for your business?

A - I started noticing the power of Pinterest for my blog when I added the Pinterest button to my blog and it showed me how many people pinned each blog post. I was amazed when I saw the numbers in the thousands on individual posts.

Q - What specific steps have you taken to boost your Pinterest traffic?

A - I have made a pin board on Pinterest called "Liz Marie Blog" where I pin all of my blog posts to with specific labels of what the post is about so it will show up when people search it on Pinterest. It also allows people to see your work and to get the blog post out to more people.

Q - What 'aha' moments have you experienced where you realized you could do something differently/better to boost Pinterest traffic?

A - My biggest "aha" moment on Pinterest was when I realized I could pin all of my work to different boards where it was most fitting for more people to see and discover. I pin my work onto several boards where it fits so that it is easily found by people surfing interest.

Q - What results or successes have you achieved because of Pinterest?

A - I have gained a lot more followers on my blog from people saying they "found me on Pinterest" I really owe a lot of exposure to Pinterest for exposing me to people who may have never found me otherwise. One of my most "pinned" posts is my mason jar organizer which has become kind of famous in itself and has been featured on HGTV. I am opening an Etsy store this week to sell them and I owe part of that exposure and success to Pinterest.

Q - If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with Pinterest, what advice would you give them?

A - If it was someone looking to gain followers through Pinterest, I would tell them to label their pins so that they can easily be found in a search. Also I would tell them to let their followers know that they are on Pinterest so that they will always be updated on your new work when they add new pins of their work.

Q - If you were sitting down with an experienced Pinterest user, what advice and/or questions would you have for them?

A - I would simply ask them their best advice on gaining Pinterest traffic because I know I do not have all the answers, just some of them.

Q - What's your success story with Pinterest? How has it changed your life and/or business for the better?

A - I feel as if Pinterest has exposed my blog to so many people and continues to do so daily. Pinterest gives my followers an option to archive my work so that they can use it as inspiration for a later day. It's not just a social network site where my post will be lost, it is archived in folders for them to go back and look at whenever they want.

Q - What are the biggest mistakes you've made using Pinterest that we can help folks avoid?

A - I have found that properly labeling each pin is important so that the pins can be found by users properly. I have also found that properly labeling your boards & categorizing helps your pins to be found better in searches & make your boards more user friendly.

Q - What are some of the most important techniques or tools you've discovered to help you grow your business with Pinterest?

A - I found that adding Pinterest buttons to my Facebook, Blog, and individual blog posts helps to gain more Pinterest followers. The more Pinterest followers you have, the more people will see pins you make from your website.

Q - Can you distill your Pinterest experience down into several key tips for readers?

A –

1. Pin all of your work or items for people to see.
2. Label your pins so that they can be easily found.
3. Add watermarks to your photos of your work that you pin so there will be no mistakes made on who made the original work in the photo.

Q - How would you like us to describe your business?

A - I do mainly associate myself as a DIY & furniture renovating blogger, but I also do run an etsy shop that I just opened {lizmarieshop.etsy.com} That I sell my Mason Jar organizers along with other items in.

Q - You mention opening a store on Etsy. Could you let us know what your results are?

A - I just opened my Etsy shop on Sunday & since then I have already had 5 sales & countless emails, inquiries, & lots of interest. That is pretty big for a little online store that is swallowed by so many other Etsy stores that are bigger & more experienced. I know I owe it all to exposure like Pinterest to get my name out there.

Q - Do you have any experience with eBay and Amazon as compared to Pinterest?

A - I do not have much experience with eBay & Amazon as far as selling or getting my name out there. I mainly was sticking to Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, Craigslist, & other social network sites.

Q - Do you have any experience with running contests?

A - Yes I do love doing giveaways on my blog. Giveaways are a very good way to gain exposure for you and the company/person hosting the giveaway. I try to limit giveaways to one or two a month because I do not want to annoy or cheapen my blog.

Q - And finally, do you have statistics that you could share to show how Pinterest has helped?

A - I am not sure how to gage this number? I do have a "pin" button on the bottom of my posts & some posts have "1,000+" Next to it just from individual posts.

Q - How much would you say your business has increased with the use of Pinterest?

A - I would say since Pinterest my blog as grown 70-80% just from all the exposure. I have never payed for advertising, I owe all of the exposure to social networking.

Q - How many new clients/sales/fans/followers have you made due to Pinterest?

A - Again, this would be so hard to guess, but the amount of comments & emails I recieve daily saying "found you on Pinterest" is significant & can probably be gauged in the 1,000's.

Q - Anything else you can think of that might be motivational for the reader.

A - Pinterest is a free way to market yourself. It is one of the most important things as a business owner to get your name out there & utilize social networking, like Pinterest, in

any way you can. Pinterest is a great tool that is user friendly & allows you to put your work out there for people who may have never discovered you to find.

Additional information on Liz Marie's giveaways:

For giveaways it usually goes like this. {In short} The company or shop contacts me to host a giveaway. I post a review about the products & post the giveaway. The guidelines for the giveaways are usually to "like" the company's facebook pages, pin an item from the post, tweet about the giveaway, etc. then leave a comment saying you did each of those to be entered in the giveaway. It usually works out very well for both parties.

The Mars Hill Church Interview

With Jake Johnson

About Mars Hill Church: Mars Hill is a large church made up of smaller congregations and that meet in multiple states. Each church is led by qualified elders and deacons and dedicated to serving Jesus and people in the context of their local community.

In September of 2012 www.marshill.com received over 37,000 unique visitors. They have over 47,000 Facebook Likes, and over 1,000 followers on Pinterest. Here are links to their sites:

<http://marshill.com/>

<http://www.facebook.com/marshillchurch>

<http://pinterest.com/marshill/>

Q - How did you discover Pinterest, and what were your first experiences like?

A - I first discovered Pinterest when my wife was using it. She is not a big technology person and usually dives into new trends after I've introduced her to them. So, I was intrigued that she had found Pinterest first and was using it so much. Initially, I thought it was a platform primarily for women since the only users I knew were my wife and a bunch of her friends.

I first started using Pinterest when a friend told me about it while I was attending the Catalyst Conference in Atlanta, GA in 2011. He talked about how much he liked it and mentioned that our Creative Director was using it. I was skeptical but downloaded the app on my iPhone while we were driving somewhere. I was pleasantly surprised and found it initially quite addicting. I spent most of my time looking at design posts and immediately saw its value as a digital mood board for thinking through creative concepts. Later that night, I went to the web version and found the experience much richer. That's my primary interaction with the platform now.

Q - When and how did you see the value of Pinterest for your church?

A - Initially, I didn't even think of Pinterest as a valuable tool for content marketing. Rather, I viewed it as a personal service for my own creative process. But after reading some articles on how businesses were using the service, and through some discussions with colleagues, I began to think through how it might be useful for our content marketing at Mars Hill Church.

Once I dug in, I was impressed with the growth of the platform and intrigued by its visual focus, as Mars Hill has always excelled at visual mediums like design and video. Additionally, I knew the users of Pinterest were overwhelmingly female and wanted to use that opportunity to speak well to the women of Mars Hill and to women who engage with our content.

Q - What specific steps have you taken to boost your Pinterest traffic?

A - Our first priority at Mars Hill Church, as always, is to talk about Jesus. We view all our online efforts as evangelical ones and want to steward well the significant platform God has blessed us with to preach the gospel. As such, our first and most prominent boards are the [Jesus board](#)—which is fun because when people follow it, a message says so and so is “following Jesus”—and the [Gospel board](#).

Additionally, we’re highlighting [events](#), [design](#), [sermon series](#), [music](#), [books](#), and dovetailing in support of our current sermon series, Real Marriage, with content applicable for [men](#), [women](#), [couples](#), [singles](#) and [parents](#).

It’s new territory, so we’re testing stuff out to see what has traction and what doesn’t. One board we’re looking forward to launching is a typography board that will have well designed type treatments of quotes from the Bible and from sermons.

I feel strongly that Pinterest will force organizations to up their game on design, as it’s such a visual platform. In order to get noticed, you have to have great photography and art. Organizations that want to gain traction should start making design a significant part of their content strategy so that when there is good content to share there is a good image to pin associated with it.

Q - What 'aha' moments have you experienced where you realized you could do something differently/better to boost Pinterest traffic?

A - Initially, we were simply posting content with the graphics we use on our website. But we're thinking through making original designs specifically geared for Pinterest users. Rather than a graphic with a sermon title that links to that sermon, for instance, we're looking at making a graphic version of a good quote or Bible verse from that sermon to place on Pinterest. It's a mini message that is shareable on the platform but that can also lead to a bigger piece of content on the other side.

Amazingly, Pinterest has become a top-10 referrer to our website. So, we want to be more intentional about how we approach the platform. We want it to be more than just an RSS feed for our content and be able to stand on its own.

Q - What results or successes have you achieved because of Pinterest?

A - We've gained a number of followers with well over 1,000 people following our boards. And as I mentioned, it's becoming a big traffic generator for our website.

Q - If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with Pinterest, what advice would you give them?

A - Things can take off fast on the platform, so it's a great way to get the word out about posts, sermon videos and events. One lesson we've learned is set up your boards before launching. Otherwise you'll overflow people's dashboards. The first day we launched, my dashboard was awash in a sea of Mars Hill posts.

Also, though it's a fast-growing platform, the jury is still out on how welcome brands are and you need to think about it differently than Facebook and Twitter. As I've mentioned, thinking visually is key. Additionally, we're really wanting to become part of the Pinterest community, not just a way to push content. This means we're trying to create pins that are of value within themselves for users. I think that's important to understand when diving in.

Q - If you were sitting down with an experienced Pinterest user, what advice and/or questions would you have for them?

A - In terms of the Mars Hill brand, I'd really like to know what they'd like to see more of and what content has been most useful to them. I'd also like to know what they find annoying and how they'd like to interact with brands on the platform.

Q - What's your success story with Pinterest? How has it changed your life and/or church for the better?

A - I think it's helped us to gain exposure with women, a demographic that Mars Hill traditionally didn't focus on specifically. The brand traditionally was very masculine in nature and as part of our broader rebranding efforts, Pinterest is a way for us to engage the women of our church in a meaningful way.

Q - How much has it increased brand recognition, and the overall success of your church?

A - As I mentioned, it's a top-10 referrer to our website. It's also highlighting the fantastic creative team we have by bringing visuals to the forefront.

Q - What are the biggest mistakes you've made using Pinterest that we can help folks avoid?

A - We post too much content at one time and that floods people's streams. It's important to space your pins out for better exposure and to not turn people off to the brand or unfollow you because it's simply too much stuff at one time.

Q - What are some of the most important techniques or tools you've discovered to help you grow in Pinterest?

A - Always thinking visually and creating content that has it's own life on the platform.

Q - Can you distill your Pinterest experience down into several key tips for readers?

A:

1. Think visually.
2. Create content that stands on its own
3. Space out your pins
4. Pin regularly
5. Watch your metrics closely

Interview With Josephine Kimberling

About Josephinekimberling.com: Josephine is a surface designer who has created artwork & design solutions for industry leaders in the fashion, greeting card & gift-wrap industries for over 10 years. I have a huge love of pattern, color, trend and fashion.

In September of 2012 www.josephinekimberling.com had over 450 Facebook Likes, and over 800 followers on Pinterest. Here are links to their sites:

<http://www.josephinekimberling.com/>

<http://pinterest.com/Josephine/>

<http://www.facebook.com/JosephineKimberling>

Q - How did you discover Pinterest, and what were your first experiences like?

A – I first discovered Pinterest when I was sent an invite back when it first started and was in Beta. I really enjoyed the ability to pin things that I usually would take screen shots of and keep on my computer, as this allowed me a more organized way to file things that inspired me.

Q - When and how did you see the value of Pinterest for your business?

A - I saw the value of Pinterest for my business when I would be time strapped for putting together a mood board or pulling together color palette inspiration. Pinterest allows me to go to that particular category and find images that meet my immediate needs. This saves so much time that in the past; I would have spent a lot of time re-searching the Internet to find the particular images or information I need in order to convey my thoughts.

Q - What specific steps have you taken to boost your Pinterest traffic?

A - Honestly, I have not been seeking to use Pinterest this way, although I organically receive a handful of followers each day. I use it as a way to pin things that I find beautiful, interesting or creative that spark the creative juices in me, and as a way to keep things in my back pocket that I may want or need to refer to in the future, such as products that I love, recipe's I want to try, home décor ideas, DIY projects, color ideas and the like.

Q - What 'aha' moments have you experienced where you realized you could do something differently/better to boost Pinterest traffic?

A - I started a board that contains licensed products that feature my artwork on them, as a way to share with people what I do and what's going on in my world.

Q - If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with Pinterest, what advice would you give them?

A - You know, there's starting to be quite a bit of Spam on Pinterest now, so I would advise people who are using Pinterest to be sure to contribute things that truly inspire them, things that are captivating and interesting in some way or things that could be helpful to people. I would also be happy to advise them on how to pin correctly and give credit to their sources. Also, check out everyone who follows your boards as you may find a great connection and resource.

Q - If you were sitting down with an experienced Pinterest user, what advice and/or questions would you have for them?

A - I would be curious as to how they approach Pinterest and what opportunities they see with the site for business. Also, how do they measure results? I would be curious to hear this from artists as well as people who have products to sell, as inspiration can definitely come from users who have very different business models.

Q - What's your success story with Pinterest? How has it changed your life and/or business for the better?

A - Using Pinterest has been a great asset for my life and business because it has allowed me to capture in one place many things that inspire me, in an organized way, so I can have a quick point of reference when searching. It also allows me to connect with other creatives out in the world, to inspire and be inspired by each other.

Q - What are the biggest mistakes you've made using Pinterest that we can help folks avoid?

A - I think it's important for people to be sure that they pin correctly, and give credit to the source. So if they pin a piece of artwork, then they should write in whom that artwork is by. If they pin a recipe from a blog, then they should credit the blog they found it on, and then also be sure to pin after they have isolated that particular blog post, so when people click on the photo, it will go directly to that recipe only, so people can find it quickly.

As an artist, it's discouraging when you see your work floating around Pinterest without any credit due to you, and without any linkable source that could direct people your way. I've started including my name and copyright on all images that I post on my blog, which is an extra step, but with Pinterest, seems very necessary.

Q - Can you distill your Pinterest experience down into several key tips for readers?

A:

1. Pin things that truly inspire you
2. Pin correctly by giving credit to your sources and isolating that source
3. Check out anyone who follows you...and their followers
4. Categorize your boards so others can find you

Interview with Roberta Isleib (aka Lucy Burdette)

About Roberta Isleib: New Jersey born clinical psychologist Roberta Isleib took up writing mysteries to justify time spent on the links. Her first series, featuring a neurotic professional golfer and a sports psychologist, was nominated for both Agatha and Anthony awards. Roberta is now writing the Key West food critic mystery series as **Lucy Burdette**.

In September of 2012 www.robertaisleib.com had over 700 Facebook Likes, and over 450 followers on Pinterest. Here are links to their sites:

<http://www.robertaisleib.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/LucyBurdette>

<http://pinterest.com/robertaisleib/>

Q - Do you have a thought out strategy with Pinterest?

A - At first I was simply trying to get the lay of the land--figure out which boards to choose and what to name them and how to populate them. I knew I would want to showcase the books I've written and the ones I'm in the process of writing, as well as my two "hooks", Key West and food! So I developed one board for my book covers, and others for each of the books in the Key West series, Key West itself, Key West food, and my recipes.

The board for the mystery I'm working on (food critic mystery #3) helps me visualize scenes that I will write for the book and even brainstorm a bit. I hope that getting a little peek into a writer's head is fun for pinners too! (And not too scary...)

Besides all that, I belong to several group blogs on which there are new posts every day. So I made a board for each of them (Jungle Red Writers and Mystery Lovers Kitchen.) And, since the mystery writers community is such a supportive, wonderful part of my world, I wanted to develop a board for my friends' books and another to describe what the writing life is like.

So that's my plan: my books, Key West, food, my blogs and friends

Q - What's your impression of the Pinterest experience overall? And in relation to gaining exposure as a writer specifically?

A - Obviously I don't have a firm grip on how all this will work, but just for example, I pinned a recipe from writer Cleo Coyle (Mystery Lovers Kitchen) for cherry streusel coffeecake this morning. 23 repins by this evening. If pinners happen to click on the Mystery Lovers Kitchen link, they will find tons more recipes plus information on the mystery writers who participate in the blog. That has to be good exposure, right?

Q - You have over 200 followers, I just figure you must be getting some good exposure here. Do you have any other way of quantifying this?

A - I can see that people who look at the food photos on the Mystery Lovers Kitchen board click through to the website. I can also see that lots of book covers are being repinned--the art is so good on the Penguin/Berkley/NAL paperback covers these days that I think people are finding them delightful and worth sharing.

Q - Any other thoughts you'd like to share?

People warned me that Pinterest could be a time sink. I didn't realize how much fun it would be! But it's not like other social media that need constant tending--it's quieter and less demanding. I go when I want to unwind a little and I post when a wonderful new photo goes up on one of the blogs or when I eat or cook something particularly good! If I'm stuck in my mystery in progress, it sometimes helps to look for a visual clue that I can post on my work-in-progress board.

Youtube Marketing Power

Interviews

Close Up with Rhett & Link

Rhett McLaughlin and Link Neal have created a thriving comedy channel on YouTube, with over 1.2 million followers on their primary channel and over 500,000 subscribers on their second channel. Between the two channels, they've accumulated over 260 million video views. We asked them to share some of their story with us and how they've approached YouTube to build a thriving business.

Q. When and how did you first envision using YouTube for business?

A. In 2007, after having our YouTube channel for about a year, we began cold calling small companies. We'd have an idea, then call a phone number on a website and attempt to talk the owner into paying us to feature their brand in one of our videos. After many phone calls, we were able to talk AJJCornhole.com into sponsoring our “Cornhole Song” and iResQ.com into sponsoring our “Dead iPod Song.” At that moment, we thought we might have a business model.

Q. What specific steps have you taken to boost your YouTube results?

A. Our most consistent strategy has been to make very shareable content. We try to make videos that start a conversation and result in a new viewer. On a very practical level, we are students of the way YouTube works. We've learned that there is a lot of power in a good title and thumbnail. So, after making sure to create quality content, we

attempt to package it as well as we can.

Q. What were some of your early challenges or struggles you faced?

A. Very early on, our main challenge was building an audience that could support a career. Even after being on YouTube for two years, our goal was to consistently get ten thousand views on our videos. We never had one blockbuster video that single-handedly built our audience. It was a slow process.

Q. How did you overcome that?

A. We just kept making videos. We tried to learn as much as we could from audience feedback and continued teaching ourselves video-making. The timing worked out very well for us. Just as we were figuring things out, YouTube was becoming a mainstream source of entertainment. When people showed up, we were there with a video catalogue for them to see. By 2009, we had gained the critical mass needed for a sustainable career in online video.

Q. What “aha” moments have you experienced where you realized you could do something differently/better to boost your YouTube results?

A. In the early days, we discovered that you have to take peoples' expectations about online video into account. We released our “Facebook Song” within a ten-minute podcast format, and it got a few thousand views. Later, we released it on its own as a music video, and it started amassing huge numbers of views. Today it has over 13 million.

Q. What results or successes have you achieved because of YouTube?

In addition to forming a growing production company based on our videos, almost

everything we've worked on in the past five years has been a result of our YouTube presence. Our first TV hosting opportunity, our TV show, our commercial directing, and producing videos outside of our channel—it's all a result of people seeing our YouTube videos.

Q. If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with YouTube, what advice would you give?

A. It's such a different environment than when we first got started. It's much tougher to build an audience. At the same time, there are so many people on YouTube now, that the potential for audience-building is greater than ever. Our advice would be to do something specific, consistent, and excellent. If your content is something that's never been done before for an audience that doesn't have an existing source of web videos, even better.

Working With Video Bloggers also known as “Vloggers”

As part of our non-profit chapter in Youtube Marketing Power we interviewed vloggers Shawna, Tom, and Alex, and here’s what they had to say about the World Vision Zambia trip:

Q. How did you feel when World Vision approached you to be a part of this project? Did it surprise you that this organization would want to involve vloggers?

Alex: Yes, I thought it was very forward-thinking and that made me happy, because a lot of brands don't get it with YouTube. The genesis of the idea was that the ways that a lot of charities are promoted are very negative and ridden with guilt. To come up with something different was really cool.

Shawna: I was ecstatic to be considered. It was an amazing opportunity, one that not only went hand-in-hand with my brand (organic experience), but one that also let me publicly support a cause I could be passionate about. My audience was also excited to take the trip with me.

Tom: I was so excited to be approached. I already knew about World Vision and supported their work, so I was very happy to be able to help out.

Q. Describe how you think this kind of experience differed from other kinds of product pitches that you've gotten from brands. Was it different?

Tom: What World Vision proposed with the Zambia trip was entirely different from every other brand that had ever contacted me. It was the first time I ever partnered with a brand because the project was so cutting-edge.

Shawna: An organic experience is always preferable to a "product pitch." People don't watch YouTubers the same way they watch a commercial. They don't want to be sold to, they want to be interacted with, and it's very important for this interaction to be genuine. It's easy to tell when someone is given specific, stringent talking points, because it simply doesn't fit on the YouTube platform. It neither benefits the brand nor the viewer receiving the "pitch" if the control is taken away from the presenter. Creative freedom and genuine expression are a must in new media advertising.

Alex: With the World Vision vloggers trip, what we did in Zambia was a totally unique experience. I could never have just paid for that experience with any amount of money. And World Vision never said, "You have to make X amount of videos, or you have to do it on certain days"—we were free to do whatever we wanted. But because World Vision was so kind and supportive, we wanted to make videos about it.

Q. How do you feel about presenting an experience like this to your subscribers? Was it difficult for you to make the decision to ally with this organization and present that to your audience?

Alex: I knew I was going to be making videos about something that was really important and interesting to me. I wanted to share that with people, and if they didn't engage with it, then it didn't matter. Hopefully people engaged, and I know that was the case because I had people say (in comments and messages) that they started sponsoring a child after watching the videos.

Shawna: It's always difficult for me to align with a brand. As a content creator, I always worry my audience will feel I am being less genuine if I do something with a brand, even

one that I personally support. I can only do my best to choose to work with brands that are personally applicable to me and to my brand, so that any question of a falsified experience is taken out of the picture.

Q. How do you think your audience received the Zambia vlogs?

Tom: My audience *loved* the Zambia vlogs! People were really interested and engaged. They enjoyed seeing what I was getting up to in Zambia, but they were also super interested in what World Vision was doing there.

Alex: I think in general people found the Zambia trip really interesting because it is a completely different world, a completely different perspective.

Shawna: My audience enjoyed seeing the trip through my eyes and learning about the work being done there. Advertisers forget that people desperately want to experience another person's viewpoint. Real excitement and interest are contagious and very hard to simulate.

Q. Did this change anything about the way you think about vlogging and being an influencer online?

Shawna: It made me feel like I could talk about important issues without it coming across as preachy, which was a great lesson to learn. I think we all have a responsibility to stand up for things that are important to us and others, and the Zambia vlogs just solidified in my mind that my videos are a free space for what I want to share, whatever that might be.

Tom: I was very surprised at how much people got involved; I received comments and messages from people saying they had sponsored a child or donated money after seeing

my videos. I never thought of myself as “influential,” but I realized that I could definitely make a difference.

Alex: There were quite a lot of responses from people saying that they had sponsored a child after seeing that Zambia vlogs. That was really cool, and I knew I had made a difference. I also started sponsoring a child as a result of seeing World Vision’s work.

Q. In your own words, how would you describe the overall experience of the Zambia trip?

Tom: The Zambia trip was so momentous, exciting, and interesting. It was really big! It certainly made me see World Vision and my online presence in a very positive light. And I think it made my audience see me in a more positive light, too. The experience is something that will stay with me for my whole life.

Shawna: My experience with World Vision is the best brand alignment I've ever had. No other company has allowed me the freedom and understanding that World Vision did, and I would definitely hold it up as an example to other organizations on how to run a successful new media advertising campaign.

Alex: Going into it, I didn't really know what to expect. It was a lot more positive than I thought it would be. The people we met were really excited and friendly, even though they were dealing with far worse problems than anyone I had ever met. That was the most humbling thing to me. The Zambian people were some of the happiest people I had ever met.

Close Up with My Froggy Stuff

The team at My Froggy Stuff has created an amazing YouTube following by focusing on craft projects for dolls. They shoot all their videos using the hand model style that we talked about in chapter 7. At the time of this writing, they have 172,000 subscribers and 105 million video views. You can see their current statistics at:

www.youtube.com/user/MyFroggyStuff. We asked “Froggy” and “Froggy Mama” to help us understand how they approach YouTube.

Q. Your tutorials are incredible—how did all of this start?

A. I grew up in a crafty home. My mom and I were always making or repainting something, from furniture to Christmas ornaments, and when I had a little girl of my own, the tradition just kind of continued. My husband was in the military, causing us to move frequently and keeping us far away from family, so my daughter and I started making stuff together for her dolls, and we would make videos to show our family how we did it. After a while, we noticed that other people found our videos useful and it all just kind of snowballed from there.

Q. When did you first envision having a YouTube channel for your work?

A. We opened our first YouTube channel for personal use, you know, for watching videos and sharing our latest creations with the family. After awhile, we noticed we had a growing audience, so we switched gears, removed all the personal stuff, and focused on crafts and The Darbie Show. I never really considered myself to be artist or

considered what I did to be work; we were just having fun, and YouTube was a great avenue to share our creations.

Q. Do you consider your YouTube efforts to be business?

A. At first no, it was just pure creative fun. We did our best to push our creative limits and have a blast at the same time. However, the growth kind of pushed us into a business frame of mind, but we make sure to keep “fun” at the heart of everything we do.

Q. What specific steps have you taken to boost your YouTube results?

A. The instant feedback we get from our audience is like “gold.” We make sure we take the time to read the comments so that we know what they liked, what they didn’t, and what they would like to see. The comments really help to keep us current and relevant to our audience, and we try to accommodate when we can without compromising our own values. Plus, we think it is important to stay connected with our audience, to let them know that we are listening and that we care about what they have to say.

Q. What were some of your early challenges or struggles?

A. Keeping up with the comments and time management. After awhile, the sheer volume was a tad overwhelming and some of the negative comments had a little bite. I (Froggy) also had to find a balance between giving the audience what they wanted and my creative freedom.

Q. How did you overcome them?

A. I had to realize that it was impossible to please everyone and that I needed help to manage the comments. That is when I went to my mom, the woman who sparked my

creative juices (Froggy Mama), and asked her for help. And boy, did she! She became the “mama” of the site, policing the comments and creating “The Request List” so that I could glance at the topics to get ideas of where to go with the next video. This all really helped to streamline the process and keep me focused. Down the road, we required more help, so we developed a little Froggy Team of myself (Froggy), Little Froggy (my daughter), Froggy Boy, Froggy Mama, Papa Frog, and Chris B.

Q. What “aha” moments have you experienced where you realized you could do something differently/better to boost your YouTube results?

A. After we created the Froggy Team and delegated responsibilities, I found myself with a ton of free time, which meant, of course—more videos! And more videos made our audience happy, which in turn made our audience grow.

Q. What business or personal results or successes have you achieved because of YouTube?

A. I am able to create something wonderful with the people I love and trust. My daughter, mom, and I have this tremendous bond where we laugh and giggle over scripts and craft projects. My son is delighted to scream “Happy Crafting!” at the end of our videos, and even my dad and husband (two of our greatest supporters) now know more about dolls than they probably ever thought they would. Our family has really connected over all of this, and to me, this is our success.

Q. Is advertising revenue your primary business goal?

A. We have a more of a social goal rather than a business goal. We hope to spark creativity and positivity through our videos and all that we do. However, I will not deny that business success is icing on the cake.

Q. If you were sitting down with someone just getting started on YouTube, what advice would you give?

A. What I always suggest to people who ask me that question is to do something they love, create the videos they enjoy, and the right people will find them. If you are passionate about your work, then you are more likely to stick with it through all the obstacles and challenges, and the work will be fulfilling whether you have one subscriber or a million. YouTube allows us to be original, creative, and expressive, so I say let your message be your driving force.

Q. What common mistakes do you see people making on YouTube?

A. I think that the concern to gain subscribers can distract some from making original content, and without the good content, it is hard to retain those subscribers.

Q. What are the biggest mistakes you've made using YouTube that we can help folks avoid?

A. For me, it was letting the negative comments get to me. There would be tons of positive statements, but I would single out the one negative/ hurtful comment and dwell on it, wasting valuable time wondering what I did wrong. What I *was* doing wrong was giving time and attention to something that had no value. Non-constructive criticism is a waste of time designed to distract you, so just hit the delete button and keep going. Focus on the positive and not the negative.

Q. *Can you distill your YouTube advice down into several key tips for readers?*

A.

- Be original.
- Consistently produce content.
- Interact with your audience.
- Stay focused and remember why you started, but don't be afraid to try new things.
- Keep it fun.

Close Up with Rosanna Pansino

Actress Rosanna Pansino combines a successful acting career with her YouTube channel efforts. She's been on top TV shows like Parks and Recreation, CSI, and Glee. She also hosts Nerdy Nummies on her YouTube channel, where she's grown an audience of over 750,000 subscribers and 135 million video views. You can see her work on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/RosannaPansino>. We asked Ro to tell us about her YouTube work and how she's grown her following so well.

Q. Tell us about your business – how did it start?

A. My YouTube channel primarily focuses on my geeky themed baking show called “Nerdy Nummies.” For the future, I am also working on other projects such as a web series, vlogs, original music, gaming, and even a movie. I originally started using YouTube as a way to learn more about the video editing process as well as to have a place to be creative. I have also always enjoyed baking growing up, and shortly after starting my channel, decided to make a geeky baking show. At that time, there was no other geek culture, food-related shows out there and I wanted to be the first. Jump forward a year or two, and here I am.

Q. When did you first envision using YouTube as part of your efforts?

A. Many of the people and friends I had grown close to in Los Angeles were either creating content full-time on YouTube already or were working closely with those who do. I was able to draw a direct comparison with my traditional acting career and new media, as I was able to see both sides equally. As time went on, I really enjoyed being

able to create my own content as well as still being able to take part in other people's projects as well.

Q. Did you have a large following off of YouTube that you used to grow your YouTube results, or did you build a following on YouTube first?

A. Before starting YouTube, I had used websites like Facebook and Twitter to grow a small following. I had a much smaller following then than I do now, and the majority of people who watch my show found it through YouTube first. Some well-known people will grow their followings on these social websites before attempting to create video content online; it all just depends on their individual circumstances.

Q. How does your YouTube work compare to other social media or traffic-generating activities?

A. YouTube is a lot different than other traffic-generating activities in that you really have to create something interesting and engaging for people to want to see it. It has much more of a "community" feel than what you might find on other websites. To me, YouTube feels a lot more personal because viewers have direct communication with the content producer.

Q. What were some of your early challenges or struggles and how did you overcome them?

A. The earliest struggle for me on YouTube was figuring out what to do and how to do it. I originally stepped into it with minimal experience in running a camera and editing a

video. Once I had the basics figured out, I had to also decide what to do that people would find interesting.

Q. What results or successes have you achieved because of Youtube?

A. YouTube has allowed me to meet a lot of really cool and hardworking people who I would have never been able to otherwise. The experience and constantly changing environment of online entertainment has accelerated my learning of all things digital.

Q. If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with Youtube, what advice would you give?

A. I think the best piece of advice that I could give to someone just starting out on YouTube is to be patient; it can take years to slowly build a following. While making online content can be extremely fun and rewarding, it also takes a lot of time. Even a video that may only be a couple minutes long can easily take a week or two to plan for. I would also recommend trying out different things until you find what fits your interests and personality best.

Q. What common mistakes do you see business owners making on YouTube?

A. I think one of the most common mistakes I see business owners make is that they completely undervalue YouTube as a legitimate platform. Many companies will make a couple of videos and then give up because they did not see immediate results. Making online content is a long-term investment and should be treated as such.

Q. How has it changed your life and/or business for the better?

A. YouTube has allowed me to do what I love more often and has given me the freedom to decide what I do day-to-day. It has given me opportunities to do things ranging all the

way from hosting a cooking show to being a main character in an animated series. On top of that, I can work on the projects I want to work on instead of hoping the right one will present itself on its own. I also am able to communicate with my viewers much more directly and watch how I influence their lives on a much more personal level.

Q. What are some of the most important techniques or tools you've discovered to help you grow your business on YouTube?

A. In my opinion, the most important tool to grow your YouTube channel is collaboration. Reaching out to others who are doing similar things can go a long way in establishing yourself.

Q. Can you distill your YouTube advice down into several key tips for readers?

- A.1) Have fun.
- 2) Work hard.
- 3) Collaborate with others.
- 4) Take feedback and criticism.
- 5) Interact with your followers.
- 6) Keep at it for the long haul.

There is no one way to go about growing a following on YouTube, and all the top talent have gotten to where they are in different ways. What's most important is to just jump in with an open mind and learn from all of your experiences.

Close Up with The Potter's House – T.D. Jakes Ministries

Jason Caston is the Social Media Developer at The Potter's House in Dallas, Texas, the church behind T.D. Jakes Ministries, which includes more than fifty separate outreach groups. We asked him about their YouTube efforts and how the ministry uses the site to promote its work. You can see their YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/thepotterstube. It has over 21,000 channel subscribers and 2.3 million video views.

If you're not familiar, T.D. Jakes is the founder and senior pastor of the 30,000-member megachurch The Potter's House. Jakes has written over thirty books, many of them featured on the NY Times Bestsellers list. His organization was honored in 2005 for setting an all-time attendance record at the Georgia Dome for its annual conference. In 2001, Time Magazine featured Jakes on its cover with the headline, "Is This Man the Next Billy Graham?"

Q. When and how did you first envision using YouTube for the ministry?

A. We started using YouTube around 2006; we believed that YouTube was the premiere destination for online video so we wanted to make sure we had a presence there. We wanted to make sure that the growing audience that was using YouTube as a online video destination had a way to connect, watch, and interact with the ministry without leaving their favorite video network, YouTube.com.

Q. What specific steps have you taken to boost your YouTube results?

A. We have developed a very consistent strategy that consists of awareness, content, and organization. We raise awareness of our YouTube channel by putting it on our

offline and online marketing materials such as websites, email newsletters, and other ministry marketing materials. We put out at least two to three videos per week since the ministry is always generating video content. Additionally, we organize that content into playlists to make it easy for people to watch exactly what they want to see and not search through our entire video library. With a consistent flow of video content in an organized playlist channel, our online audience continues to share and recommend our videos, and that's how we continue to grow.

Q. What were some of your early challenges or struggles?

A. Initially, we chose the wrong name for the YouTube channel. We called it “thepotterstube,” which is a good name but not consistent with our other social media properties. We also had issues with our videos having worship music in them and thus generating copyright warnings.

Q. How did you overcome them?

A. By the time we researched how to change our YouTube channel username, we realized two things: 1) it wasn’t possible to change usernames, and 2) our channel had grown so much in popularity that we didn’t want to create a new one. Therefore, we let the channel stay as-is and people seem to actually like the different name. Also, when it comes to copyright issues, we make sure we acknowledge them when the warnings arise so that we do not run afoul of the copyright three strikes rule that could get our YouTube channel shut down.

Q. What “aha” moments have you experienced where you realized you could do something differently/better to boost your YouTube results?

A. Our first “aha” moment was when we learned that people want consistent content. They want to see a channel that updates often and continues to keep the videos coming. Our next “aha” moment was when we put our videos into playlists, we saw our views increase rapidly because people were able to get to the videos they wanted to watch much more easily. Our last “aha” moment was when we started to consistently use YouTube tags, and we started to see our views rise because people were finding our videos much more often.

Q. What results or successes have you achieved because of YouTube?

A. With the popularity and success of our YouTube channel, we have been able to utilize YouTube as a marketing channel and ministry opportunity. When we need to distribute content and get videos out to the public, we can use YouTube as a great distribution network. Also, when it comes to ministry and reaching people where they are, YouTube is a great network. When our pastor wants to minister to thousands online, he can make a YouTube video and people can be reached right through our channel.

Q. If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with YouTube, what advice would you give?

A. First, I would say to develop a video content strategy. Determine how much video content you can gather and/or create for your YouTube channel. Then determine how often you will put videos out, at least putting out one per week. Next, I would suggest getting a graphic designer to design a nice banner for your channel. Make your channel look visibly appealing and professional. Finally, I would suggest that you start advertising

your YouTube channel on all your marketing materials (website, Facebook, Twitter, flyers, etc.) so that people see that you have a YouTube presence.

Q. What common mistakes do you see business owners making on YouTube?

A. The number one mistake is not enough content. Many businesses start out great, but then they taper off and eventually neglect the channel. Therefore, the people who subscribed and want videos from your business eventually forget about your organization. The number two mistake businesses make is putting out a lot of unprofessional videos and/or a channel that looks unprofessional. Your YouTube channel is a representation of your business and the channel and content should be professional. You don't have to put out professional videos *every* time, but at least take some time to put out a good amount of professional content, because you are running a professional business.

Q. What's your success story with YouTube? How has it changed your life and/or business for the better?

A. YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world, so we knew that if we put our content there, people would want to consume it. Our large YouTube following has taken our ministry to another level online, because each video we upload becomes a ministry opportunity for our church as well as the people who share it. We enjoy seeing thousands of people watch and share our videos, and we enjoy bringing our content to the video network that people love.

Q. What are the biggest mistakes you've made using YouTube that we can help folks avoid?

A. First and foremost is to name your channel accordingly—make sure you choose a username that is consistent with your other social media channels. If your company is named Acme and your website is Acme.com, then try to get a YouTube channel named youtube.com/acme. Next, stay consistent with your video content. We currently send out consistent video content, but in the beginning we weren't, and people neglected our channel because they didn't trust that we would give them the content they wanted, even though we had it. Finally, YouTube is a major video channel, a major search engine that has billions of views, but it doesn't have what your organization is offering, so make sure you continue to showcase your organization to the best of your ability.

Q. What are some of the most important techniques or tools you've discovered to help you grow your business with YouTube?

A. Content, tags, and playlists are major techniques we use to grow our business on YouTube. We continue to distribute content consistently; we make sure we fill out all the tag, title, and description information so that our videos are easily searchable. We also make sure our playlists are utilized for specific topics or events that our users want to watch on our channel.

Q. Can you distill your YouTube advice down into several key tips for readers?

A. First, develop a video content strategy, then create and/or gather videos for your channel and put them out consistently, at least once a week. Second, make your YouTube channel look professional, have a designer create a cover banner for your channel, and make sure most (not necessarily all) of your videos have a professional feel

to them. Third, utilize playlists and tags. Create playlists that will keep your video content organized and easily accessible on your channel. Also, when you upload your videos, fill out the tags, description, and title information thoroughly because that makes your videos much easier to find by online users. Fourth, communicate with your users via your videos. If an online user takes time leave a comment, then address it. If it's positive, then thank them; if they ask a question, then answer; and if it's negative, determine whether you want to respond, delete it, and/or ban them.

Close Up with Mindy McNight

If you're not familiar with the Cute Girls Hairstyles website (www.cutegirlshairstyles.com) and the companion YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/cutegirlshairstyles), then prepare for a new experience. Mindy started her blog in 2008 after getting constant requests from moms who all asked the same question: "How'd you do that hairstyle?" She has been listed as one of the top fifty women on YouTube and has built a thriving online business.

Q. Tell us about your business—how did it start?

A. For many years, I would get stopped all the time when out shopping with my four daughters by moms wanting to know how I had created the girls' intricate hairstyles. As willing as I was to stop and explain, it became too much when some moms actually asked me to undo the hairstyle and redo it, or recreate it on their own daughters. As such, I began posting hairstyle tutorials via step-by-step photos on my blog at CuteGirlsHairstyles.com in October 2008. It was easier to refer them to a website than to spend so much time explaining. . . and I was finally able to get my shopping done without much interruption.

Q. When did you first envision using YouTube as part of your efforts?

A. During the next several months or so, fans began asking me for more pictures in the blog posts (to better show what happened between steps four and five, for example). It quickly became too tedious for me to take so many still shots while completing the hairstyle, so I asked my husband to help. After another few months, even he grew tired

of taking the photos and suggested that we use a USB Flip mini camera to film the hairstyle, upload it to YouTube, grab the embed code, and place it in the blog post rather than photos. That way, moms could start/stop/rewind/fast forward/pause the video at any point to better understand the hairstyle.

Q. Did you have a large following off of YouTube that you used to grow your YouTube results, or did you build a following on YouTube first?

A. We built a small base off of YouTube first, which we know made a huge long-term contribution to our YouTube success. By the time we started using YouTube, our photo tutorial blog was generating approximately 1,500 pageviews per day. We would not classify that as large, but it did help jumpstart our video view counts on YouTube. In those days on YouTube, if a video in a category reached a certain level of views in a short amount of time, your video would make “The Most Watched” list on YouTube (either daily, weekly, monthly, or all-time). Your video appearing on that list would generate new views, since that list was published real-time on YouTube. Making that list also placed a “badge” on your profile, further lending credence to your channel for new visitors who were more likely to subscribe by seeing those badges.

Q. Was there a tipping point where you realized YouTube was going to work well for you?

A. We felt that the average extra cash amount needed to dramatically reduce bankruptcy in the average U.S. hardworking and frugal home was around \$400 per month. Once we hit that threshold, we were ecstatic and very grateful. In terms of what catapulted our success, it was when YouTube recognized CuteGirlsHairstyles’ hard work

and nominated us as one of four young channels for May 2011's "On The Rise" contest.

This is a program where fans vote on their favorite over a two-week period of time, with the winner earning a feature on the YouTube homepage for a day. We were privileged enough to win, and since then we have just been trying to keep our heads above water!

Q. How does your YouTube work compare to other social media or traffic-generating activities?

A. We take great care in making sure that our YouTube content is good and consistent, and that the social engagement is there. However, it is important to never rely on only one social platform with your online business. We all learned that lesson when Facebook implemented its "Promoted Post" feature for pages, which greatly diluted the ability for fans who had liked our page to see our posts. We put so much effort and pocket cash into growing our Facebook fan base early on, and it was literally obliterated to less than 30 percent efficacy in driving traffic to our blog posts or YouTube videos. For that reason, we have used three social media platforms as a core, each strategically driving to the other, with additional social platforms ancillary to those. If one were to become less effective, we have another with a following right behind it. In the early years, it was our blog, Facebook, and YouTube. Today, it is our blog, Instagram, and YouTube. We also will never forget that it was due to our loyal blog fans, who were there from the beginning, that this YouTube success began. For that reason, we make sure that CuteGirlsHairstyles.com has a great design, functionality, and SEO, which gives a "stickiness" factor for new and returning visitors.

Close Up with Dan Weinstein at Collective Digital Studio

We had the privilege of connecting with one such agency, Collective Digital Studio, to discuss the topic of its work. CEO Dan Weinstein gives us a behind-the-scenes look at this fascinating world of big brands and big YouTube stars.

Q. Can you tell us about Collective Digital Studio and the role it is playing in the marketplace?

A. Collective Digital Studio (CDS) is one of the preeminent multi-channel digital networks, producing, distributing, and marketing digital content geared to the coveted millennial generation. CDS boasts some of the top digital content channels across comedy, entertainment, music, and food and a talent lineup that equates to a true “Dream Team” of digital influencers led by: Dane Boedigheimer (The Annoying Orange), Freddie Wong & Brandon Laatsch (FreddieW), Harley Morenstein (Epic Meal Time), Rhett McLaughlin and Link Neal (Rhett & Link), Hannah Hart (My Drunk Kitchen), and Megan and Liz Mace (Megan & Liz). Headed by this lineup of Internet stars, CDS' content currently garners more than 400 million views per month across its network of more than 300 premium channels that it exclusively distributes and monetizes. The Studio's ability to work with its talent on seamless, authentic brand integrations has consistently attracted the attention of Madison Avenue and industry heavyweights ranging from Dodge, Samsung, and Gillette, to Sprint, Dole, 20th Century Fox, and Paramount, who have turned to CDS to develop impactful digital video marketing initiatives. CDS is also the chief architect and producer of the multi-platform

successes *Fred: The Movie* (Nickelodeon), *The High Fructose Adventures of the Annoying Orange* (Cartoon Network), and *Video Game High School* (YouTube/Netflix). We are leading the charge in premium entertainment geared towards millennials online.

Q. What value proposition do you offer to YouTube video makers that they cannot get on their own?

A. This depends on the creator, but we have built an infrastructure to better monetize (through sponsorship and ad sales) content, produce larger scale projects, finance specific initiatives, help market and build audience, deploy technology for myriad initiatives, and transition from YouTube star/creator to global cross-platform brands. Ad sales, production, financing, marketing and audience development, technology, and management.

Q. It seems like most of your channels are young, comedy-oriented channels. Is there a similar service for craft, makeup, or cooking (arts/crafts/beauty) type channels?

A. Yes. We have a burgeoning fashion/beauty/lifestyle vertical (anchored by a relationship with Estée Lauder), as well as music, kids and family, gaming, etc. All are primarily focused on the millennial audience.

Q. Is there a minimum subscribership or number of video views that you need to see in order to accept a channel?

A. No. We pride ourselves on working with talented creators and performers at any stage of their development. Talent can come from anywhere. We have some more developmental talent as well as some creators who have some of the largest audiences online. It's more about the talent and the opportunity for us rather than the scale.

Q. What other criteria do you look for when considering whether to add a channel?

A. Are they talented, is their opportunity beyond what they are currently doing, do they fit into a vertical we are currently working with, are they brand-friendly, etc.

Q. Are there channels that wouldn't be a good match for your service?

A. No, we are right for everyone, especially those that speak to a demographic that we don't talk to very much, like moms, etc. But if you are a talented individual and speak to a millennial audience, we could probably help.

Q. How do you ensure a good match between the brand (advertiser) and the channel/video content?

A. This is always the challenge. It's important to understand that it is just as important to be authentic and genuine with the audience as it is to get across a brand's message.

When we can integrate a product that fits with the core consumer of our talent/influencer, and come up with a creative way to tell a story or enable that content through the brand and be up front with the audience, that's when we have the best success. Trying to trick the audience never works, and both brand and creator need to be on the same page. We have been able to do this very well time and time again.

Q. Is there an "average result" your channels experience when they join CDS?

A. The measure for success is different for everyone. For some, it is about increasing their audience; for others, it is about exploiting that audience in other and more scaled ways. In the case of the Annoying Orange, it was creating a global media property through TV and merchandising. We look at every creator as an individual opportunity.

Q. Are there rules of thumb that you share with channel owners about what level of revenue they should expect from their work? Like a million video views should result in X dollars?

A. This really depends on a lot of different variables and is very hard to predict.

Composition of audience (U.S. vs the world), consumption habits (mobile vs. web), scale of audience, engagement of audience, broad audience or specific niche/demographic, time of year (Q4 vs. Q1), are they brand-friendly, etc. It's hard to create a formula or template, as everything is different.

Q. If you were sitting down with a brand-new YouTube user who wanted to really grow their personal or business brand via YouTube, what basic advice would you give them as a starting point?

A. Content marketing and audience development are as important as simply creating good content—understanding where your potential audience is and who they are so you can serve them. Stick to a schedule, make things that are shareable and invest a lot of time; there are very few overnight successes.

Q. What common mistakes do you see business owners making on YouTube?

A. Lack of authenticity and engagement. Understand that the platform is a two-way conversation and produce content and engage with it as such. Don't just publish or "post and pray."

Q. What are some of the most important techniques or tools you've discovered that help grow a YouTube business (in terms of channel subscribers, video views, and e-commerce/traffic)?

A. There is no secret sauce. There is hard work, dedication, making great content that people want to watch and (more importantly) share. Collaborations with people or entities who have a built-in audience doesn't hurt either.

Q. Can you distill your top YouTube tips down into a few suggestions for people who want to use it for business/revenue results?

Introduction To Instagram Power Interviews

Can you do "real" marketing on Instagram? That was the question on my mind when I began our journey on Instagram.

I wanted to know the answer for two reasons. First, at our small company, Liberty Jane Clothing, we are always trying to build our brand and reach more customers. Second, I heard that Instagram has over 150 million monthly active users, which is more than Twitter.

We started our Instagram journey by asking successful marketers what they were doing on Instagram. That way we could just learn from them and copy their successful marketing habits. It's a great way to learn something quickly.

This free ebook you're about to read includes those interviews. We hope you enjoy them. They are packed with great insight, wisdom, advice, and even humor.

And yes - we really do use Instagram for marketing. You can see how we're using it at www.instagram.com/libertyjaneclothing. You can also visit each of the marketer's profiles interviewed in this eBook. Check out what is working - see if it's right for you.

What did we discover about marketing on Instagram? There are ten monetization strategies currently working very effectively on Instagram – we'll explain those latter in this eBook, and we go into great detail describing them in the new book

[Instagram Power](#) published by McGraw Hill. Instagram really is a very powerful marketing tool, (and that is not hype), and the new book covers everything you need to know to implement an effective marketing strategy.

An Interview With Hayley & Lucas

From Alphabet Bags

(<http://instagram.com/alphabetbags>)

About Alphabet Bags: A U.K. based accessories brand creating lovely items with an emphasis on the simple, bold and cheerful.

Jason: *How did you discover Instagram, and what were your first experiences like?*

A. We heard about Instagram from a relative who was using it to add filters to their personal phone snapshots. As we didn't have any followers to start with initially we were posting mainly personal photos and playing around with the filters. At that time we weren't setting out to gain a huge following, but it was nice to keep a visual record of both our office and home lives on the Instagram account.

Jason: *When and how did you see the value of Instagram for your business?*

A. As we began to network with other small businesses via Instagram and started to hear from customers that they had discovered our site through Instagram we realized that it could be a really valuable tool for our brand. It was really nice for us to see our customers taking pictures of our products and packaging and sharing these with us and their followers too. Many of our Instagram followers have found us through other

Instagram users who have posted photos of their orders.

Jason: *What specific steps have you taken to boost your Instagram work?*

A. We try to post pictures every day now but are careful not to post too many or anything that's not going to be of interest to our followers. We feel it's useful for our brand to post new products, snapshots of our office and behind the scenes photos as well as more personal photos (as we're a small family business). It's nice to give our customers a glimpse into our personal lives and interests as well as our work and products.

Jason: *What results or successes have you achieved because of Instagram?*

A. An obvious positive result is gaining new customers and fans of the brand via Instagram. However, Instagram has also proven to be a great tool for connecting with other like-minded individuals and small businesses, who you wouldn't usually come across in day to day life at the office. We really enjoy looking at all the photos posted by other users that we follow. It can get quite addictive!

Jason: *If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with Instagram, what advice would you give him or her?*

A. Don't post too much, especially in quick succession and take time to create interesting set-ups. If you make sure there is good lighting in your photos the Instagram filters will look their best, or you won't need to use a filter at all. Try to follow as many like-minded

people or businesses as you can find. It's a great way to connect with other brands and interesting individuals and often they follow you back so it's a great way to build up your followers too.

Jason: *What's your success story with Instagram? How has it changed your life and/or business for the better?*

A. Instagram has certainly had a positive effect on our business. It has been an excellent way to get our brand out there and a really nice way to connect with customers and keep them informed. Previously most of our contact with customers was done via an email newsletter, now Instagram is an equally important way for us to keep in touch with fans of Alphabet Bags. Instagram is much more instant than a newsletter though, and much more fun to use! It has become a daily part of our lives and we really enjoy posting photos as well as browsing other user's photos.

Jason: *If you've used Instagram for your business, how much has it increased sales, brand recognition, and the overall success of your business?*

A. We have noticed that we have gained customers as a result of using Instagram. The increase in sales has not been huge, but the increase in brand recognition has been just as important, if not more so.

Jason: *What are the biggest mistakes you've made using Instagram that we can help folks avoid?*

A. We don't feel we've really made any mistakes. We're always cautious to make sure we're not posting too much or offending any of our followers. We try to share photos of things we think our followers would want to see.

Jason: *What are some of the most important techniques or tools you've discovered to help you grow your business with Instagram?*

A. None that we can think of, although we are planning on running our first Instagram competition soon so we're looking forward to seeing how that goes.

Jason: *Can you distill your Instagram experience down into several key tips for readers?*

A.

- 1. Don't go crazy with the amount of images you post*
- 2. Boring photos are boring, make sure the images you post are nice and/or interesting*
- 3. Think about angles and lighting when taking your pictures*
- 4. Find and follow users who interest you, it's a great way to connect with like-minded people*
- 5. If you have cats or dogs make sure you post plenty of photos of them!*

An Interview With Brian Lites

From Dakota Mechanic Studios

(<http://instagram.com/dakotamechanic>)

About Dakota Mechanic Studios: Brian Lites makes functional art out of up cycled World War II airplane parts and sells them under the Dakota Mechanic Studios brand.

Jason: *How did you discover Instagram, and what were your first experiences like?*

A. I only discovered IG while searching the App Store on my iPod. The concept intrigued me. I have no formal training as a photographer but I do enjoy photography. The idea of sharing photos seemed much less involved than keeping up with your status and comments on Facebook. From the first photos that I posted I began to receive “likes” and comments from interested viewers. Within a short time I was hooked.

Jason: *When and how did you see the value of Instagram for your business?*

A. My business deals in making functional pieces and art out of old WWII era airplane parts. The majority of the photos that I was adding to IG were aircraft photos. I began to notice that many individuals responding to my posts were pilots, aviation enthusiasts, military personnel, veterans and airline industry employees. That is when the light came

on to the potential IG has in marketing my business. With IG you have a platform that is free and easy to use, where you can present your product to hundreds or even thousands of people, and spend very little time doing it.

Jason: *What specific steps have you taken to boost your Instagram work?*

A. I noticed that there were IG users that had large numbers of followers. My first thought was to emulate their approach. But on second thought I concluded that the quality of my followers, those with the greatest potential of becoming customers, outweighed the quantity of followers. That was my main focus as I began to market my product. I am not saying quantity of followers is bad. If you focus on your core customers I believe the quantity of followers will come as time goes on.

Since my business deals with those in the aviation world, I would much rather have a hundred followers who love airplanes than a thousand followers whose posts consist exclusively of self portraits in the mirror and photos of One Direction band members. You know what I am talking about. My product line appeals to a smaller customer base than most businesses. I have to be deliberate in gaining followers.

In the "Explore" tab I search hashtags that pertain to my potential customers. Since I am dealing with WWII aircraft parts, I search hashtags such as #aircraft, #warbird, #aviation, #airplane and so on. In viewing a persons photos I can ascertain whether they have an aviation interest or just happened to take a photo of one airplane. Those who have numerous photos of airplanes are those I follow. Some of the photos are genuinely

good photos and deserve comments. By making comments, attention is drawn to my profile page.

When people start following my IG page, I view their “followers” and “following” lists. Quite often there are others in those lists with similar interests. I peruse their photos, make comments and follow their profile. More often than not the “follow” is reciprocated. There you have it, one more potential customer.

Photography is another key element in boosting your IG potential. Take unique photos. Get a decent camera so you can take quality photos that represent your quality product. If you have poor photos to present to your customers, your product will be perceived as poor. Studies have shown that the quality of your images has a direct impact on what people are willing to pay. Take your time and do it right.

Jason: What ‘aha’ moments have you experienced where you realized you could do something differently/better to boost Instagram engagement?

A. After posting a photo I could spend several minutes adding hashtags and comments. This process became monotonous and time consuming. Then I found Webstagram. Anytime I am near my computer it is much easier to tag photos and make comments. I will still tag photos on the go with my iPhone, but the use of Webstagram has definitely streamlined the process.

Jason: What results or successes have you achieved because of Instagram?

A. It is difficult to say with certainty the impact the use of IG has had on sales. I can say for certain that views to my auctions as well as my website have increased significantly when I post product photos on IG. More traffic has continued to mean greater final bid prices and inquiry's via my website.

Jason: *If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with Instagram, what advice would you give him or her?*

A. I think there is a tendency by some to rush into putting their best photos on IG right away. When you post a photo and hashtags it, the photo is at the top of the hashtag list for a short period of time. It can be very short depending on the hashtags you choose. Spread the posts out. Allow people to see the quality of your work over time. Dumping all your photos in at once leaves nothing good for the future. Only post 1 or 2 photos a day. IG allows you to attach 30 hashtags per post. Use them to gain followers. Your hashtags should pertain to your photo but can extend beyond that. A Google search will show popular tags such as #instagood, #instamood, #picoftheday and so on.

Interact with fellow IG users. Comment on their photos, like their photos and follow them. Don't be passive, but rather be proactive in building a base of followers who are prospective customers.

Jason: *If you were sitting down with an experienced Instagram user, what advice and/or questions would you have for them?*

There are many IG users offering guaranteed followers if you follow the instructions on

their posts or if you download an app. I have veered away from these offers because I have wanted followers who are truly interested in the product that I am selling. I don't need followers for the sake of having followers. My question would be, is there any validity or benefit to such offers? Have those who have accepted these offers seen marked results in the sale of their product? Has it proved profitable in their business?

Jason: *What's your success story with Instagram? How has it changed your life and/or business for the better?*

A. I have definitely seen increased viewing activity on my EBay auctions and website with the use of IG. Even though I use other Internet services for marketing, I have found IG to be one of the easiest. Now that I am established as an IG user, I can post a photo every day or two. Instead of playing a game on my phone when I have down time, I use the opportunity to follow a couple new people and make comments on their posts. In doing this I am only adding to my earning potential. They say time is money and using your time to make money has never been easier.

Jason: *If you've used Instagram for your business, how much has it increased sales, brand recognition, and the overall success of your business?*

A. Since I began using IG for marketing I have definitely seen an increase in the final bid price on auctions. In addition, the number of views and watchers on eBay auctions has increased with the posting of product photos on IG. Website traffic may double or triple when I put up a new post. It is difficult to say what percentage of my traffic comes from

IG, but I know there is a direct correlation between posting to IG and views.

Jason: *What are the biggest mistakes you've made using Instagram that we can help folks avoid?*

A. If I have made any big mistakes I haven't realized it yet. But once I have read your book I'm sure I will see a few.

Jason: *What are some of the most important techniques or tools you've discovered to help you grow your business with Instagram?*

A. My customer base is much smaller than say a fashion designer. I put more effort into targeting my most likely customer. Searching hashtags and following new people has proved to be the single most effect technique I have used. Next would be to realize that those you are following are more than just potential customers, they are unique individuals sharing their lives through photos. Comment on their photo, interact with them. The personal approach draws their attention to your page. Not only will this help your business, it can be fun as well.

Jason: *Can you distill your Instagram experience down into several key tips for readers?*

A.

1. Take your time in posting photos. Don't post everything you have at one time.

2. *Take quality photos. Take your time and get good shots. The photo you post will be someone's first impression. You want it to be a good one. Don't be afraid to delete bad photos.*
3. *Comment, comment, comment. And did I mention comment.*

An Interview With Laura Lawson Visconti

<http://instagram.com/Lauralawsonvisconti>

Laura Lawson: Laura Lawson Visconti is an artist, author, speaker, and award winning blogger with close to 150,000 Instagram followers.

Jason: *How did you discover Instagram, and what were your first experiences like?*

A. I first downloaded Instagram while watching the Super Bowl in February 2011 – two years ago now! At first, it wasn't anything more than a way to let my friends know what I was doing on the daily... you know, the typical what I'm eating for lunch shots. Even now, I use Instagram as a photo diary. It's an amazing thing to be able to look back on little memories forever encapsulated in this app. I often enjoy scrolling through my entire feed and reminiscing.

Jason: *When and how did you see the value of Instagram for your business?*

A. As an artist and writer, I use Instagram as a sketchbook to hone my creativity. While I'm not a professional photographer by trade, Instagram has fostered my ability to forge compositions and play around with color. I see compositions for both my paintings and my photos everywhere I go. Additionally, it's fun to post pictures of paintings I'm working on and market my book on Instagram. I haven't necessarily used it directly for marketing myself, but indirectly it's actually become quite useful.

Jason: *What specific steps have you taken to boost your Instagram work?*

A. Only a few months after I downloaded Instagram, I gotta admit that I was pretty hooked. I researched photo-editing apps that photographers I admired were using – I currently have about 40 on my phone – and after much trial and error, I now have a go-to routine for editing photos before posting them to Instagram. This includes straightening and sometimes using the clone tool in Filterstorm, playing around with ambience, contrast and center focus in Snapseed, and almost always using Filter 4 in VSCO CAM. All that being said, aside from learning how to get the most out of expensive iPhone editing apps, it really has been spending time with the people of the Instagram community that has inspired my work the most. I have cultivated innumerable friendships with people, many of whom are lifelong friends, especially in Seattle and San Francisco. These creative people push and inspire me every single day and I'm so grateful to Instagram for fostering these relationships.

Jason: *What results or successes have you achieved because of Instagram?*

A. Because of Instagram, I am able to promote my art, book, and my fiancé's career. I have been invited to take part in mobile photography art shows, social media gigs, several books, and have been interviewed countless times for various media outlets. It has helped to cultivate my name on the web and commanded a certain level of respect in the social media world. More than anything, I use Instagram for fun. I enjoy talking with brand ambassadors on how to grow their following using the app, but for me, it is first and foremost just a hobby.

Jason: *If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with Instagram, what advice would you give him or her?*

A. More than anything, I would encourage them to be as interactive as feasibly possible with other users – both people commenting on their photos, and photos they randomly run across that interest them. Follow and interact with others who share common interests or have a similar business. And just have fun with it! A lot of people take Instagram way too seriously. Enjoy it for what it is, and at the end of the day, it's not a popularity contest – just a fun app that is a great way to share your day-to-day life with the world.

Jason: *If you were sitting down with an experienced Instagram user, what advice and/or questions would you have for them?*

A. Whenever I meet a fellow “experienced” user, I always enjoy hearing how they use Instagram and what filters and photo editing apps they prefer. We all do it a little bit differently. Strangers tend to view us as celebrities, which is completely silly because all we do is document our lives. I enjoy making fun of Instagram with others who also have a lot of followers. We try to not take it so seriously. In fact, several experienced users, along with myself, have parody or secret accounts where we use Instagram “normally” and feel less pressure to always post stellar photos.

Jason: *What's your success story with Instagram? How has it changed your life and/or business for the better?*

A. My success story with Instagram is still evolving. I believe I am just beginning to tap into the benefits of having a large online following. It has led to job opportunities, interviews, writing gigs, and so much more. More than anything, it has led to friendships. I have met truly gifted and creative people all over the country due to Instagram. I believe that nothing is so important in life as relationships.

Jason: What are the biggest mistakes you've made using Instagram that we can help folks avoid?

A. Mistakes? It's an app. I don't think you can make mistakes using Instagram. If you are trying to grow your brand, my advice is pretty self-explanatory: use it often, be interactive, and be creative!

Jason: Can you distill your Instagram experience down into several key tips for readers?

A. Be as interactive as possible. Use hash-tags but not excessively, and never use them in your caption. Play around with outside photo editing apps, but downloading Snapseed will give you virtually all you need. Never post DSLR photos.

This might be obvious, but the better pictures you post, the more attention you will garner. Be creative. It takes time to hone a creative eye, but after awhile, you will learn what your followers want to see from you, and you will begin to see square-shaped compositions everywhere.

Organize a photowalk! Gather other Instagram users together and meet for an hour or two to shoot in your city. Be creative – just about any location can produce cool

and unique shots if seen in the right way. I have been a part of photowalks with over 100 people, and some with just a handful. Both are fun and yield completely different results. You will learn a lot from other people, and form some great friendships in the process!

Don't become obsessed. If you're spending hours each day on your phone, turn it off and go outside. If Instagram becomes more about the documentation of your life than living your life, you've missed the point.

An Interview With Erika Blanco

From United Generation Youth Ministry

(<http://instagram.com/foursquareug>)

United Generation: Is the High School and College program of Puyallup Foursquare Church in Puyallup Washington.

Jason: *How did you become familiar with Instagram?*

A. Like many people with an interest in technology, I frequently find myself investigating new platforms and testing their usability. Who wants to be left behind when the next big thing comes along? Most stay on my phone and get deleted after about 6 months, but Instagram was much different. It instantly became my favorite social media platform because of its simplicity and visual strength. As a new mom, it was my digital photo album. My son's first smile, first steps, and all else were easily snapped, shared, and seen by our family and friends.

Jason: *How did your church start using Instagram?*

A. When we love something in our personal lives, we are eager to integrate it into our church communications strategy. Our youth (high school and college) ministries were the

first to use Instagram. This audience is more resilient to change and also more technologically literate. The value was instantly clear – visual imagery. In our communications department, we are constantly editing what we are doing by “cutting the words in half, and then in half again.” Our audience is familiar with media and marketing by mainstream companies who spend billions every year to create the perfect image. To compete with an attention span that is conditioned to viewing images and quick messages, we are constantly trying to show rather than explain our message. Instagram is perfect for that strategy.

Jason: What actions steps do you take to publish photos on Instagram?

A. We have a photography team, a social media team, and a graphics team that all partner together. This team is constantly expanding and giving creative people an outlet. Multiple people managing one account has been the most successful strategy for us.

In an effort to improve our quality of pictures as well as promote the creative community, we have a rotation of volunteer photographers that shoot our services, events, and meetings. They send us their best edits and we post. The photographers have included Daniel Dillard, Jeff Marsh, Phu Nguyen, Caroline Lindsley, Nicole Gibbons, and many others.

Jason: What advice would you give to new Instagram users?

A. With every post keep in mind: If I was reading this without any context, would I . . .

- *Know what's going on?*
- *Feel involved or included?*
- *Be compelled to join?*

Be mindful to engage beyond your post. Just because you posted it doesn't mean that everyone knows about it!

Don't assume people know what you are posting. We have found that a post with little context is worse than posting nothing at all.

Keep it clear.

Keep it consistent.

Leave them wanting more.

An Interview With Jason G. Miles

Author of [Instagram Power](#)

(<http://instagram.com/mrjasonmiles>)

Authors Note: Since I wrote *Instagram Power* I've been interviewed by top online marketing organizations such as the American Marketing Association, Profnet, MarketingProfs, and many others. I thought I'd include my answers to their commonly asked questions in this eBook.

Q: *What advice would you give marketers interested in using Instagram?*

Jason: I'd tell them to jump into it as a personal user and begin to learn the basic functions of the App. Then begin to envision how it could work for their business. Then I'd tell them to begin studying how other companies in their industry are using it. Simply make a list of the top companies in your industry and look them up on Instagram - start following them - and see how they use it. Finally, I'd suggest they become very clear about their "editorial mission". In other words – why are they on Instagram and what are they going to provide for their fans or followers that is unique & interesting? For example at Liberty Jane Clothing our Instagram editorial mission is to "give our fans and

followers at behind the scenes look at the design process & lifestyle of our lead designer – Cinnamon Miles”.

Q: What business advantages does Instagram have over other sites like Facebook and Twitter?

Jason: Instagram and Pinterest are both examples of the shift in social media toward visual content - and away from conversation based content. They are “conversation light” compared to the older social media sites – and that is truly refreshing. People are tired of being chained to Facebook and Twitter to ensure they don’t miss a customer question or comment. As a marketer, this new shift to visual content is great because it's easier to share visual content than it is to constantly engage in conversations.

Q: In Instagram Power you talk about 10 monetization strategies working on Instagram - can you share them?

Jason: Sure, they include:

#1 Classic Display Ads: *Instagram is perfect for using “old-school” display ads. These use powerful images with strong copywriting to create a solid call-to-action. Many companies are simply re-jiggering their old display or print ads for the Instagram format.*

#2 Giveaways: *Many companies are using giveaways effectively on Instagram. For example Forever 21 recently did a nice giveaway with a cool calendar view that they*

used to reveal the prizes – almost like an advent calendar that reveals the next prize each day.

#3 Special Offers: *In the book I discuss how Alphabet Bags does this effectively with their use of a “Free Shipping” offer. Many companies are doing these types of offers on Instagram. What is especially cool is when you only announce the special offer on Instagram and then monitor results. This gives you a mechanism to test and document the effectiveness of your Instagram work.*

#4 Contests: *Contests on Instagram are easy – most companies use a hashtag as the method of entry. Modcloth is an online retailer that does this particularly well.*

#5 Advertise An Info Product: *Of course you can announce an information product on Instagram and then drive people to get it on your website. You’d think this would just be the domain of Internet marketers, but recently Cisco did this effectively with content from a survey they did – they released snippets from it as graphical content on Instagram then encouraged people to get the full report on their website.*

#6 Two-Step Lead Generation: *When you target hashtags repeatedly to get niche enthusiasts to follow you, then publish images of your products, you’re conducting two-step lead generation. That is the “aha” trick mentioned by Brian in the Dakota Mechanic interview. This is a brilliant marketing tactic.*

#7 Visual Product Launches: *This tactic is very simple and works nicely on Instagram. We do it regularly at Liberty Jane Clothing. The idea is simple – start sharing pictures of your*

products very early in the process – from concept to design to construction. Include people in the journey to build enthusiasm and early buy-in.

#8 Photo Walks: *Local marketers can use Instagram effectively by conducting photo walks. These are meet-ups where you offer to give people a walking tour of your neighborhood or city – so they can take Instagram pictures. These are very popular and it gives local merchants an opportunity to meet with people – be cool – and share more about their business.*

#9 Leverage Hashtags: *Local marketers can also leverage hashtags to drive viral sharing. A good example is a restaurant in New York – Comodo. They publish a hashtag on each menu item so prospective buyers can see what other customers pictures looked like. Of course as people order their meal, they also snap an Instagram picture – use the hashtag - and the viral sharing continues.*

#10 Create Physical Products: *There are lots of sites online, like stickygram, which allow you to turn your Instagram images into physical products. Things like stickers, magnets, calendars, coffee mugs, etc. So if you have particularly iconic images, or a very strong brand that people really find desirable, then you could simply start selling your “merch”.*

Q: What do you say to the marketer that says, "I'm already overwhelmed with Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest - I cannot add another social media channel to the mix"?

Jason: I'd agree, it's a challenge, but Instagram has a few unique attributes that make it particularly effective. First, it's very easy to use and doesn't require a lot of daily administration. In fact, the advice most Instagram marketers would give you is to only add one or two pictures a day. Go for high quality and low volume. Additionally, the conversations are less common, and shorter, on Instagram. So, you can do it quickly and easily. Finally, Instagram is a perfect platform to recycle imagery that you might already have from product shots, to behind the scenes pictures of your business. Even sharing personal shots makes sense if you're trying to include customers in a "behind the scenes" look at your work.

Q: Why are you so excited about Instagram and why did you decide to write [Instagram Power](#)?

Jason. When I was writing [Pinterest Power](#) I was visiting with my brother-in law. I told him to check out Pinterest for his small business -and he said - "I am, but Instagram is working better for me". So I asked him what he was doing - how it was working for him. He showed me the ropes and I was hooked. I could immediately see how it would be helpful to our small business.

I decided to write Instagram Power because I was passionate about learning how to use it for marketing purposes and to share those lessons. Because of the sales success of [Pinterest Power](#) I had the opportunity to propose a few additional projects to the great folks at McGraw Hill. I suggested [Instagram Power](#) & [YouTube Marketing Power](#). I'm excited that both of the new books have recently come about. I try to write each

book in the same way - as a simple to follow guide for marketers. Anyone can pick up these books and start implementing strategies for their small business immediately.

Q: Is the fact that Instagram is used primarily on a smartphone important as a marketer?

Jason. I think it's massively important. The number of people who are online via a mobile device versus a computer is growing at a huge rate. Just three years ago it was like 3% of all Internet traffic was from mobile. This year it was closer to 20% - and in some countries like India – the percentage of Internet users on mobile devices has surpassed the users on computers. How does this relate to Instagram? Well, Instagram is really the first large-scale social media site “born mobile”. Twitter didn't adopt a mobile strategy until it's 4th year of business. I think the conclusion to all of this is obvious – marketers are going to need to learn how to adapt their efforts to mobile devices ASAP – and Instagram is a great place to start.

Q: Any final thoughts before we wrap it up?

Jason. Sure, in 2014 my goal is to release lots of resources related to visual content marketing – including Instagram related resources – I'll be doing that on my blog, www.makesellgrow.com, so be sure to check it out.

--Excerpt From--

The Pastors Guide To Kindle Publishing

By Jason Miles & Dr. Wayne Goodall

An Interview With Paul Young

Bestselling author of *The Shack*

Jason: *You describe yourself as an accidental author. How did the idea to publish The Shack come about?*

Paul: *Well you see...I met this woman, and married her. I had never even tried to publish a book before The Shack. I have always been a writer, but only as gifts for friends and family, usually poetry or songs or short stories. Kim, my wife, had been asking me for a few years to write a gift for our children that would “put in one place how you think, because it is outside the box”. So my goal in 2005 was to write this story for our children (now ages 2-33) and get it done by Christmas. We did not have the money to print the book until after Christmas. The first and only intended run of The*

Shack was 15 copies at a local print shop.

Jason: *If I've heard the story correctly, you ultimately decided to self-publish through a company you created. Why did you take that route?*

Paul: *To be clear, I didn't create this new publishing company, two men in California did. After we had spent the time preparing this little photocopied story for publication and twenty-six publishers turned it down, there weren't many options left, other than starting something. Wayne and Brad created the publishing company, of which I have no ownership, not only to publish *The Shack*, but to pursue other projects as well.*

Jason: *I've read that the book didn't get too much traction for the first year. Is that true, and what did you do that first year to spread the word?*

Paul: *That makes me smile. The book landed in Brad's garage in May, 2007. In the first thirteen months we spent less than \$300 on marketing and promotion and shipped over a million books. Other than a little, 45-minute-a-week podcast in which Wayne and Brad talked about the concepts in the book, and giving copies to friends and family, we did nothing; it was all word of mouth. Of course, I'm thinking the Holy Spirit had something to do with that too. It was such a God-thing from the beginning.*

Jason: *Was there a specific tipping point you can remember where the book really took*

off?

Paul: *I suppose you could say there were a number of tipping points including people who had read and gave it to friends and family. Having incredible people like Eugene Peterson, who made a very bold declaration and endorsement on the front cover, made enormous word-of-mouth impact. Communities of Faith, such as Grace Chapel in Franklin TN passed out the book into their networks, Anderson Merchandising, Barnes & Nobles, Amazon and others started ordering it by the truckloads.*

I don't think you can underestimate the timing of the message into the culture and the presence of the Internet as key factors as well. There were countless people, like an elderly man in Australia, who would pick up odd jobs so he could buy copies and give them away. There was a family who for a year created and managed Papaslove.org – and gave thousands of copies away. There is no formula here, but there is God's great sense of humor at work and kindness and a timing and purpose that is not ours.

Jason: *Wikipedia lists The Shack as having sold over 18 million copies, making it one of the most successful books of all time – what was your original goal when you published it?*

Paul: *When I made the original 15 copies at Office Depot, it did everything I ever wanted this book to do. Six copies to our kids, Kim got a copy, two cousins in Canada, and the rest to friends...and I went back to work. When the conversation began emerging about*

actually publishing, which had not crossed my mind when I wrote; the goal became 10,000 copies over two years and 100,000 over five, so that three men in California could talk to Hollywood about making it into a movie. Nobody saw this coming.

Jason: *What do you attribute the success of the book to?*

Paul: *There are so many elements that play into this question. The presence of the Internet, the uniqueness of the creative work, the nudge in a few hearts to publish this, the myriad of folks all over the world who were touched and wanted their friends and family and study groups and faith communities to participate in the conversation that emerged, God's sense of humor, timing and grace and a love for participation.*

Jason: *If you were sitting down with someone just getting started with self-publishing, what advice would you give them?*

Paul: *Please understand that I have been part of a phenomenon that had nothing to do with any skills or understanding of self-publishing, and I don't know much more than when this adventure began. I am aware that everyone in the industry is caught in a massive transition and no one knows how it will play out. My advice, therefore, are not on the technical side of this question but more matters of the heart.*

If you are a person who is a person of faith, then there are much bigger questions than

those related to self-publisher vs. traditional etc., but centered your own heart and journey. If you publish because you are looking for identity, or value, or worth, or security, or purpose, or love, or destiny, or significance, or meaning, or community (all the things that truly matter), then I anticipate that God will climb inside your journey and bring to the surface all manner of stuff that needs to be healed, be it through success or failure however defined (and success will bring more broken to the surface than failure ever would). God cares more about you than about a book or movie or song.

Jason: *What are the biggest mistakes you've made in your publishing career that others could avoid?*

Paul: *You can always avoid mistakes by not doing anything, but that itself might be the biggest mistake. Part of the beauty of being human is the journey itself, the process of discovery, the pains and wonders of relationships and the adventure in becoming. Everybody makes mistakes and we all need to learn to laugh at ourselves. The most difficult issues, in my opinion, arise out of question of identity linked to performance and output, that is when you confuse your identity with what you 'do' rather than who you 'are'.*

On the technical side, there are lots of conversations to be had; for example, the place and role of social media (very important currently), the use of traditional advertising marketing and promotion models (not always helpful). We are in an evolving arena and

the very ground under our feet is changing as we walk. The presence and expansion of electronic media platforms, for eBooks for example, are here to stay. How does one measure a mistake? If it touches and participates in the healing of one person, perhaps the author of the work, it is enough.

Jason: *What are some of the most important techniques or tools you've discovered to help spread the word about your books?*

Paul: *You assume that I actually know what I am doing, right? Thanks for the grin. I am of the opinion that no amount of promotion or marketing will ever replace the simple excitement of a reader who then shares their enthusiasm. Your friends and family will tell you they love you and your work, and that is vital. Strangers will tell you how it impacted them; listen to them even more. We have only begun to see the new publishing platforms and technologies, each which could quickly make any conversation today antiquated and obsolete. If you don't like change you might be in the wrong field. There are people who are knowledgeable about social media, the use of multi-media video branding etc. as part of the publishing landscape. Make stuff up, everyone else is. Try things, take risks and laugh a lot...and pray.*

Jason: *Can you distill your publishing experience down into several key tips for readers?*

Paul: *Boundaries make for good relationships, walls divide. Build boundaries, which includes good solid contracts and understandings. Take risks and live with the results as part of the learning curve not as punishment. Learn to listen to yourself and also to your friends and family and, especially if you are married, to your spouse. Understand that we are in a bit of a free-for-all at the moment. Publishing is changing, and will continue to do so. Trust that the purposes of God are different than yours and you want to be part of those, not yours. Relax and learn to laugh at yourself. Realize that God doesn't need a book to get things done, that your participation is not essential but it is sought after by a God who doesn't do anything alone. Remember that you are more important to God than the product that emerges. Do everything today as well as you know how, inside a community of relationships and the grace of just one day. Probably not what you were looking for, but the best I have.*

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