

WEBINAR

The Do's and Don'ts of Instagram Dispensary Marketing

Webinar Preview & Audio Available at:

<https://www.foottraffik.co/webinars/the-dos-and-donts-of-instagram-dispensary-marketing/>

Slide 1	<p>The Do's and Don'ts of Instagram Dispensary Marketing</p> <p>Get Likes, Score Leads & Grow Your Brand</p> <p>Today, we'll be covering the vital things you need to know to safeguard your account and reach more potential customers.</p>
Slide 2	<p>My name is Eduardo Silva. I'm the VP of Sales here at Foottraffik, and I'm really excited to be sharing this information with you today.</p>
Slide 3	<p>Foottraffik is a digital advertising and analytics agency. We've been in business for over five years now, exclusively focused on dispensaries and delivery services within</p>

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North America. We're really excited to be helping advance our industry forward.

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A couple of housekeeping items before we get started.

If you have your cell phones on you, please put them facing down on your desk or mute them. We are going to be covering a lot of information in a very short window of time and it helps to retain focus.

Familiarize yourself with the Zoom interface. If you haven't become a master at Zoom yet, if you go to the bottom of your screen there is a Q&A button. We do have moderators with us today that will be addressing questions throughout the webinar.

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Instagram has quickly grown into one of the most popular social media platforms.

Its ability to connect people around the world with beautiful visuals and thoughtful captions has created a unique community.

Instagram is visual storytelling that sparks the imagination and allows brands to connect with consumers in a different way.

It's a great platform for brands, but it's also a great platform for individuals. And, often, these individuals like to share the things they're enjoying—including your



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products.

Instagram is one of the best discovery engines for cannabis dispensaries. It's top funnel, and ideal for brand awareness only, not for generating e-commerce sales.

At the same time, many dispensaries have learned the hard way that there seems to be a double standard for dispensaries.

Having your account shut down or shadowbanned is pretty common for dispensaries. Dispensaries can invest thousands of dollars building up their following and creating content only to have it stripped away.

If your account is shut down, you lose access to all of your followers. You don't own that information, the same way you own your customer database of email addresses and phone numbers. Instagram owns the account and data. You can also lose your photos if you don't have them saved elsewhere.

If you're shadowbanned, your Instagram account becomes less effective. You can continue to post, but your images won't show up under hashtags.

So let's talk about how to avoid these dangers and safeguard your account so you can build brand awareness.



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Do start with your bio.

Your bio is your introduction to the world. At the same time, because of Instagram's draconian view on cannabis, you can't be 100% upfront. You'll want to create an interesting bio that doesn't mention cannabis, marijuana, weed, or anything nicknames for mary jane.

You also want your bio to say that your content is only for those 21 and up.

"Something along the lines of "San Francisco dispensary giving you a behind the scene look at our community and providing education. 21+ only," should be fine, just make sure to infuse anything you write with your brand voice.

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Number 2: Track your stats.

If you're not sure what's working or if certain types of posts are better for your audience, track your stats. How many likes are you getting? How many comments? Which posts are performing well for the different stats?

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

If you convert your account to an Instagram business account, you will gain access to more data and analytics, but you will put your account at risk.



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“Do” number 3: Take it off the platform- convert your followers into email and SMS subscribers.

As I already mentioned, you don't own your followers' information. If your account gets shut down, you lose the ability to stay in touch with them.

To avoid this, make sure to regularly share your SMS opt-in phone number. For example, “Text herb to 611999.”

Encourage people to join your private SMS list or include calls-to-action to join your email list. This way, you'll have ways to market to them outside of Instagram.

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Number 4: Engage with your followers.

Social media is all about connecting—so don't just post and run. Make sure to respond to comments and to create posts that make people want to comment.

Dial into what's happening in your area and in the industry. Ask for opinions, ask for feedback. You can even just ask for silly weed jokes. The point is to get people talking and to create a conversation.

Don't be selfish, engage with your audience outside of your own Instagram profile, and engage with your audience on their profiles. Consumers love to wake up to their favorite local dispensary commenting on their photos, it builds brand loyalty and keeps your top of mind with your followers.



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Have you ever been on Instagram at 5 pm on a Sunday? It's pretty dead right?

People are more active on Instagram at certain times. Find out what that is for your target audience and make sure that you're posting then so that they'll see it. Otherwise, your engagement will suffer.

Pro tip: Instagram users are very active on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights and after work during the week. So schedule a post around the right times to get in front of your audience.

Also, due to covid, people are spending the most time online in history and that means more activity on Instagram. This is your golden opportunity to reach your audience.

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Number 6: Do use the stories feature.

There was some pushback from some users when Instagram rolled stories. It seemed like it was just trying to be Snapchat.

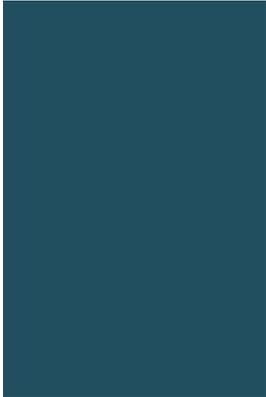
But people love them, and they watch them. If you want to get their attention, you need to use stories. And because they are at the top of the app, it's a great way to get content in front of your audience faster.

The great thing about stories is it's informal, you get to show a behind the scenes look at your brand, the budtenders on the front line, and really speak with your audience on a personal level.



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Post a few stories throughout the day for maximum visibility and have fun with it.

Pro tip: reach 10,000 followers and you can enable the ability to launch swipe up campaigns with links to third party websites. This can be a landing page for customers to join your community by providing their email address or phone number.



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Some people love hashtags, some people hate hashtags. If you're a hater, it's time to get over it and start using them anyway.

Hashtags are a popular way to browse posts and build community. Your followers can even choose to follow hashtags now so post using those hashtags will show up right in their feeds.

If you're not sure where to get started, here are a couple of ideas. First, you should have your own dispensary hashtag, which could be your name, and you should use industry and local hashtags so that you'll show up for those. Check what other dispensaries are using, check what your followers are using. Find the hashtags that are most in line with your brand and go to town.



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Our 8th do is to be consistent with posting.

Getting a post up every day is hard and it takes a lot of time. That doesn't mean you should just post whenever



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you're able to though.

If you don't post consistently (or engage with your followers regularly), you won't get noticed. Nor will you build any brand loyalty. People's attention spans are short. If you don't create a consistent presence, your followers will move on, and you'll lose all the brand equity you worked so hard to create.

To make sure you're consistent, create a plan and a posting schedule. Create themes. You should create a strategy by the quarter and implementation plans by the month, week, and day. You don't necessarily have to post daily, but you should post several times per week.

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Number 9: Be you.

Yes, there are certain things you should and shouldn't post about, and we're going to talk about those in a moment. However, despite those, you should still be you. Use your brand voice and style. Are you snarky? Funny? Helpful? Silly? Informative? Dial into the tone you want to convey and make sure it aligns with your brand and your vision. Then make sure that everything you post aligns with that.

Now let's talk about what you should not do on Instagram.

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If you want to keep your account active, don't list prices,



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product availability, or information about upcoming sales.

The whole issue with cannabis on Instagram is that it's still classified as a schedule 1 drug at the federal level. If Instagram thinks you're trying to sell cannabis, you're done. Don't post these things in the image or in the comments unless you want to lose your account.

Instagram community guidelines clearly state "The buying or selling of illegal prescription drugs (even if legal in your region) are not allowed."

Don't number 2: Don't link to your products, your menu, or a store locator. Just like you don't want to post prices, you don't want to link to cannabis for sale.

Remember, Instagram is meant for brand awareness, not driving sales. The minute you start promoting the upcoming vendor day sale, you put yourself at risk. A follower can report you, and with good reason, your post will be taken down, or even worse, your account will be shut down.

Unfortunately, that means not linking to your menu or store locator. Yes, this is probably what people want to see when they click on your bio, but it's not a smart move to do so.

Instead, you can link to educational pages like your blog. You can even send followers to a landing page to become a part of your community by providing their email or phone number. Information is fine, promotion is not.



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Don't just post whatever. Throwing pictures up without thinking about the implications is a bad idea. Remember, everything you post will reflect on your brand.

Create a style that represents your brand well and is in line with your brand voice. Think about the styles of the images you are posting, as well as the words you use.

It's OK to be irreverent and use slang, but you just need to make sure that it aligns with your brand. For example, if you're a medical dispensary and you're using slang, it may not seem authentic.

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Don't post stock images.

Instagram is a visual platform. Because it's all about the imagery and the emotions they evoke, you need to create and post original work to really get noticed.

Take pictures and make videos, and have your budtenders do the same. You can do shots at work and use images that your staff is willing to share that shows them doing things like hiking or which showcase beautiful spots in your community.

I mentioned earlier that you shouldn't post pictures of products. Now, you probably know that there are plenty of accounts that show pictures of different vape pens, edibles, and other products. There are also plenty of accounts that post closeups of flowers.

This is a gamble. Yes, you can do it, again, without mentioning sales, availability, or pricing, but there's still a chance you will get shut down. If you want to be as safe as



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possible, don't post any product pictures.

If you don't mind living on the edge a little, weigh how many product pictures you want to feature and how you want to approach it. Make sure you aren't promoting anything. For example, if you just wrote a blog post about concentrates, you can show a shot of a dab and mention in the caption that you have some helpful info on your blog. Don't mention cannabis, don't mention consuming it, don't mention buying or selling it. I can't say this enough. This is the biggest issue that dispensaries have with Instagram. You can't overtly sell on this platform. Instagram is meant for brand awareness and loyalty, not sales.

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Our last don't today: Don't post images of people using cannabis. This comes across as promoting the use of an illegal substance.

Now, we know that legally consuming cannabis is fine, but Instagram has chosen to follow federal law since it operates across the world. Save yourself the stress of having your account erased—skip the picture of people enjoying a joint or packing a bong.

Once again, reference the community guidelines provided by Instagram.

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I want to address one more concern I've heard from dispensaries about their accounts.



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Should you keep your account private or make it public?

If you want to control who sees your content, make your account private. This will lessen the chance of your account getting erased, but it will create more work for you and it will likely reduce the number of followers you'll get.

It's also a good idea to look at every follower's profile to confirm they're 21 or older before approving them to view your private profile. You don't want an underager following your dispensary profile.

If you have a public account, you also have the option to have a business account. This can be hit or miss or dispensaries. Because you don't want to seem like you're selling or promoting cannabis, you may not want to have a business account. If you choose to have a business account in order to have access to the features and analytics that it comes with, just make sure to stay within our do's and don'ts to keep your account as safe as possible.

Now, these do's and don'ts aren't a guarantee that you won't get shut down, but they should help reduce your chances of having your account taken away.



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