

On Your Terms Episode 125:

Re-air Episode 36

How to Grow Your Business on Instagram with Natasha Samuel

Sam Vander Wielen: Hey there. It's Sam and welcome back to On Your Terms. I'm so excited that you're here. So, I'm really excited because for the next couple of weeks, I'm running something that I'm calling Online Marketing Summer School. So, I'm going to be airing a series of episodes that are all geared towards helping you bump up your online marketing game this summer.

So, I'll be real with you, as always. I am taking a little time to recoup this summer because I just lost my mom. My mom just passed away. Yes, you heard that right. I have lost both of my parents in the past year. So, as you can imagine, it is very tough, very overwhelming, and I need a little bit of space. And I know that I've already given you hundreds and hundreds of episodes of this show, and thousands of emails, and blog posts and social posts, and I know that there's so much waiting for you that you might just not have had time to catch up on yet.

So, I decided to put it all together for you and call it Online Marketing Summer School. And I am really excited to bring back some of my favorite episodes from my and also from your favorite teachers here that I've had on the show to help us bump up our marketing game this summer.

It's such a good time to revisit your marketing strategy or to create one if you haven't yet. Don't worry, I won't tell anybody. But it's such a good time for you to do that because you know you can get some things set up this summer to maybe do some sort of promotion in the fall or just have a better half of the rest of 2023.

So, I invite you to kick back, relax, listen to the next couple of weeks of episodes all about online marketing. And I hope that you'll send me a DM on Instagram, @samvanderwielen, or, you know, leave a review of the show wherever you listen to let me know if you've liked these episodes. Hopefully, if you've never heard them before, I'm introducing you to something new.

And if you're listening to them again, take a note from my mom, who was a brilliant,

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brilliant woman and would reread so many books throughout her life. Like, she reread the book Flow and Tipping Point and so many different books throughout her life. She would reread them in different parts of her life, and she would always walk away with something new, and she would always put in the notes what year she read it and what she learned that year versus the other years. So, there is nothing wrong with re-listening to things. I re-listen all the time. So, I hope that if you've listened before, you take away something new from this great episode.

So, I'll see you on the other side. Please send me a message. Let me know how you liked it. Thank you so much for listening.

Hey, Natasha. Welcome to On Your Terms.

Natasha Samuel: Thanks for having me, Sam. I'm excited.

Sam Vander Wielen: Oh, I'm so excited for you to be here. I'm just so excited for everybody to have the opportunity to listen to you and to be taught by you. For full disclosure, I am one of Natasha's clients, and I learn so much from her. And she's my go-to for learning all about Instagram. So, I'm really excited to dive in with you today.

Natasha Samuel: Yeah. And you're killing it on Instagram. I love seeing all your content. So, yeah, I can't wait to talk about all things Instagram.

Sam Vander Wielen: I know right? Yeah. Well, hey, my taxes Reel from yesterday is doing good. I was laughing about that. I was like, Of course, I don't even do anything about that, but that goes well. Yeah, it's fine. It's all value.

So, I was thinking it would be helpful for you to just share a little bit with everybody about who you are, how you got here, and how you work with people now.

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Natasha Samuel: Definitely. Yeah. So, my name is Natasha of Shine with Natasha. I'm an Instagram strategist now, which takes route in a lot of different ways, education, programs, speaking, content creation.

And I started my business while I was still in college, kind of feeling lost, confused, what's next? And I was really inspired by one of my internships. She was a woman that worked in digital marketing, which I'd never heard about. And she had her own remote business and it was just her, and I had never heard of that either. And so, she kind of gave me the push and inspiration to start my own thing.

And so, I started out with social media management. So, I worked with a lot of different types of clients, some had services, some were personal brands, some had physical products. And so, I really grew my skills and all things content creation, Instagram strategy, and also started to build my own brand as well.

And so, yeah, that kind of led to the pivot that I am now of really helping with the strategy side of things and helping people, whether they have teams that are implementing for them or they're still DIY-ing everything. And video, showing up with confidence is definitely what I like to lean into, and something that's sustainable, and fun and enjoyable because I know social media can feel like it's draining from our businesses more than it is getting really great results. So, that's kind of what I focus on with my clients and community.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. I love that. And I know my community is going to be so happy to go now and follow you on Instagram and watch your stuff and buy your stuff, because you just have such a beautiful approach to Instagram. And it's not this like rah rah, super polished perfect thing. And you focus on value, and creating community, and creating evergreen content, which is something I'm really passionate about. So, I think it's awesome and you're a breath of fresh air, that's for sure.

Natasha Samuel: Thank you.

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Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. So, I thought that it would be helpful for you to start out by just sharing with everyone, you know, why is Instagram in particular a place for our listeners to show up and help market and promote their businesses? Like, what can they do on Instagram that they might not be able to get from some other platform?

Natasha Samuel: Absolutely. And I think the thing that makes Instagram so overwhelming - which is actually one of my favorite parts - is that there are so many different surfaces to leverage on the platform, which I know we'll get into a little bit later. But you can create in so many different ways, which really gives a dynamic experience with your brand. It's not just short form video. It's not just long form video. It's not just tweets and words. It's really a dynamic experience where you can leverage the surfaces in a lot of really unique ways. So, I would say that's definitely one of my favorite parts.

But when I think about all the social media platforms, I think YouTube and TikTok are getting a lot of the spotlight right now. And I love both of those platforms for different reasons. But I think those platforms often have this consumption and discoverability part of them.

But with Instagram, I feel like with how DMs are set up, and the Lives, and the Comment sections that you really can engage and connect deeper with the brands that you connect with. And I find people all the time on TikTok, I'm like, "Wow. This is such a great product, or idea, or creator." But I always go over to Instagram to really connect with them deeper. And I think that's what a lot of business owners are really trying to do and Instagram is just an amazing vessel to do that.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. I could see that because it's like, because of all those different services - which by the way, whenever we say services, we mean Lives, Post, Stories, whatever, all the different places you can appear on Instagram - I think that helps you to get a more holistic picture of someone, you know, whether you would really

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then want to take the leap to work with them. I don't know if that's how you feel about Instagram versus, like, a TikTok, for example.

Natasha Samuel: Absolutely. And I think sometimes a TikTok, you know, you can see something, you're like, "Oh, I need this," and you're maybe ready to buy or check something out. But I think that with Instagram, a lot of people need a lot of touchpoints with your brand to, not only trust you, but to get to the point where they're even considering purchasing something, because they might have a problem and not even know it until they see your valuable content, and your education, and all those dynamic things that you can do and create on Instagram. So, I really do think it's definitely still the top tier in terms of social media, and it's definitely a non-negotiable with all the options they have for different types of brands.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah, for sure. And what about somebody who's a bit smaller on Instagram or just getting started on Instagram has now chosen to focus on it to grow it, is it still possible to grow on Instagram? Should that even be our goal? Is growth the goal? What's the goal there?

Natasha Samuel: Yeah, that's such a great question. So, I think if you are newer, definitely a really natural goal is that you want to build some type of community. Keeping in mind community can be small and still convert.

One of my clients, I think she had maybe, like, 500 followers at one time and she was making high ticket sales in her business at that time with a small, engaged audience of all the right people.

And I think even as someone who's grown my platform a lot - and if you're an Instagram follower, I love you guys - it becomes a lot when you have a lot of people, which I know you know as well. So, more isn't always better.

So, really, yes, I think focusing on growing and getting in front of the right people is

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absolutely something you can still achieve. I think Reels have made that even more accessible. Collaborations is something else I really like for maybe doing Lives, takeovers, collaborative content on the Feed. So, I think there's a lot of ways that you can grow organically on Instagram.

But I also would challenge people, if you already maybe have a small following that maybe your goal isn't looking for new people, but it's maybe focusing on the people you already have and nurturing them really, really well. I feel like we're often looking out on the horizon versus looking at what's right in front of us. So, I think that growing is a really great goal, but nurturing your current community is also a really great goal on Instagram. Those are kind of the two main places people can kind of focus their energy on.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah, for sure. And I talk about that on the podcast a lot from the business perspective, that as the business has grown, I've actually focused a lot on nurturing current clients. I have a whole podcast episode dedicated to why you should treat your clients like the Olive Garden does, like once they're in, they're family, because it pays back better dividends than trying to constantly go back. And I don't mean just selling your clients more stuff, by the way. I also mean making them fans of your work so that they go tell other people because that helps too.

But I'm thinking like, as somebody listening to this and they're thinking, "Okay. So, now, Natasha's told me I have to nurture the audience that I have, maybe I get growth from it." But in terms of connecting with them in a deeper way, what kind of content should they be creating then on Instagram, particularly for coaches and service providers who are, you know, bulk of my listeners?

Natasha Samuel: Absolutely. I think we often hear niche all the time and I don't think you have to shitty niche down to the most specific thing ever. But I do think you need to focus on a few categories of content that you want to be creating on. Content pillars is what they're often called in the space.

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Essentially, I like to pick five pillars or buckets or categories that you really want to build all of your content around. And this ensures that you're not just talking about your offer, not just talking about what you do, but you're really creating an experience with your brand. Because if all they talked about was Instagram on my Instagram page, I would be boring. I wouldn't even want to consume my own content.

And where that really starts for people that are listening is really think of that ideal follower. What do they do? How are they consuming content? What problems do they need help with? Where are they on their journey with what you're going to help them with? And what are maybe some mutual interests? For example, I talk about Instagram, but business is a very natural part of that because I speak to business owners. If I spoke to content creators, that would be a whole other pillar, but that's not something I specifically do.

Another connection point is morning rituals, mental health. I share my matcha. I share my office space. All of those are things that I have intentionally chosen to share, which also kind of gives you that permission that you don't need to share everything. It's about choosing the very specific, intentional things that you want to share that essentially create your brand.

So, if we kind of look at your five content pillars, there's probably going to be two, maybe three, that are the most obvious ones. They're like your expertise. There's that kind of niche word, I guess you could say, of where you really want to focus on in terms of your Instagram strategy.

And to my best ability, you really want to think about how you can get really specific. Because, for example, there's so many people that do Instagram, but I focus on video and I focus on sustainable content creation, and really figure out what are the things you want to lean into to really promote your own values and methodologies and processes really clearly in your content.

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And then, from there you're going to add in those maybe shoulder industry things. Maybe for me, Instagram and business or Instagram and email. So, figuring out what that maybe related topic is. And then, chances are you probably have like a little personal bucket. That's where you'll add those little connection points.

So, that's kind of what I like to think about, there's not just one thing. It's kind of like an array of things that creates a really fun experience for your brand. And I feel like it also makes it where you don't feel limited to only talk about one thing.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. Which is really freeing. And I know a lot of people want that. I call this the umbrella content method, where your main pillar is the handle, and then you have these little spokes that are related, but they branches off of what you do, and that's very helpful because I, as well as Natasha, will be bored out of my mind if I talked about legal stuff all day long, which is why I did a Texas thing yesterday. So, I just like to talk about other things, but all, I guess, with that ideal customer in mind of how else is this helpful and relevant to them.

One thing that I tend to hear a lot, especially from my customers - I have kind of people in two camps - they like to, on the one hand, post a lot of the personal content, so more of the matcha morning ritual, that kind of stuff content. But then, when it comes to creating like here are three steps to whatever, people don't want to do that quite as much.

On the flip side, I also have people in my community who will say, "I just don't want to show up personally. I don't want it to be about me. I want it to be about my work." And they sometimes won't even have a picture of themselves on their Instagram. I have pretty strong opinions about and I've talked about it with them about how well maybe you can do in a platform like that. But I'd be so curious what some of your thoughts and opinions are for people in both of those camps.

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Natasha Samuel: Definitely. And I think it's about meeting in the middle for both of those. Because on social media, more and more people are just wanting to connect with other people. And I think that's where bigger brands, either completely miss the mark or they do it just right, of understanding that their team, their community, their founders need to be on social media. I need to know who I'm investing in, who else is a part of that community, who else is using or wearing or featuring that product.

So, I think we need to think about it in the same way, especially as coaches and service providers, what makes you you is what makes you different from someone hiring the other person. And that's in a really good way of if someone doesn't like a casual vibe, like maybe really hate yellow, all those different types of things might mean we might not vibe on a one-on-one or you might not like my programs. So, while that might feel like you're repelling a lot of people by leaning into those things that make you different, it's actually what will attract all of the right people.

So, yeah, I think you have to have that personal connection point and you have to have those here and there. And there's a lot of ways to do that where you don't always feel like you're having to share your family, your kids, your home. There's a lot of ways to make very, very clear boundaries on that. But we definitely want to make sure that we're really being strategic with how we're positioning ourselves as experts, whether it's showing what you're doing, it's featuring your clients and your case studies and testimonials, or if it's literally teaching. I think it can be a variety of ways.

I think people often think teaching and showing up has to be really structured but it could just be inspiring. Or maybe, like I know one of my clients loves to rant and give unpopular opinions, so that's her favorite way to to coach and show her own coaching style.

So, I think when we really tap into how we work with our clients and how we want our brand to feel, you can kind of see like, "Oh. It's like a little bit of me, and then it's like a little bit of my business," and that's kind of how you meet in the middle there.

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Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. And it feels like you're giving them a preview of what it's going to be like to work with you. So, if they're not going to like what they see there, they're probably not going to like your product. We don't need people just hanging around on Instagram who don't either like us or never intend to work with us, you know? So, I think that's super helpful.

So, I think it's so helpful that you talked about the content pillars or buckets, whatever we all want to call it, and how to kind of divide that up, not make all five of them match a morning routine as much as we all want to because it's a lot more fun to create, unless you're a lifestyle influencer, I suppose.

So, if you were taking these content buckets, I think one thing that can be intimidating about Instagram, and also kind of shiny squirrel syndrome esque, is the fact that there are so many surfaces. So, if you're sitting there with your five content pillars, then being like, "Wait. So, should I do Reel, Live, Posts, blah blah, blah?" Could you help them understand how does somebody who's now going to go at it with a strategy to take those content pillars and apply it to some sort of schedule and picking which surfaces work for them?

Natasha Samuel: Absolutely. So, I really like to recommend with your content pillars, most of them are probably going to go on a lot of different surfaces. But, one, maybe you're more personal one might only go on a platform like Stories. So, kind of think of it that way. They don't all have to go on every surface. One might be only for one specifically.

But how I like to think of it, I think what will be helpful is to write down how I see all the surfaces. So, I really think of Stories as like the heart and soul of your Instagram account. This is where you're going to connect the deepest with your followers. And this is for the people that are wanting to get to know you and really see those behind the scenes types of elements. So, that's where you're more personal things are going to go.

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But I also think this is where those really strategic behind the scenes go of you creating a new offer, you're working in your business, you're working in your programs, your offers, speaking, coaching. All of that is really important to show because it's kind of like built-in social proof. Like, I'm not just selling you on what I do. I'm actually actively doing it. And it's also just built-in content.

Like, you can easily take what you're already doing right now. Like, if I really wanted to build podcast guest speaking, I could literally put my phone up right now and do a time lapse of us podcasting. And then, when we hop off, I could do a boomerang, like, "Hey, let's do a boomerang, Sam." Those are really easy ways to show what you're already doing. So, I don't think it has to be really complex.

But Stories are expiring, so they don't have to be perfectly curated. But we do want to post the most frequently to Stories. And I find that if you had to choose a non-negotiable, nail Stories first. That's always the place that I like to start because it leads to the DMs. And I just feel like it's the best converting type of content as well.

Then, we have the Feed content, which isn't expiring, it's going to be on your grid. It's going to be in the feed actively. And this is where all the other types of content go. And I think instead of thinking of it as, like, five different surfaces, if we think of it as like Stories and Feed, it kind of makes things feel a lot more intimidating. Because if we think about it, Reels are posted to the Feed. Instagram Videos, which could be Live replays, are also posted to the Feed along with the rest of your Feed content. So, I kind of like to think of that number or all your other pillars, really, they should be like sprinkled across that entire little grid preview people get when they go and check out your brand.

In terms of Feed posters, I think they're still very relevant. I like to think of them as places to get really great quality engagement, whether it's comments or maybe it is, you know, Saves, Shares, all that type of stuff I think is really important to think about with

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your Feed content. You can be educating, maybe it's like funny memes, maybe it's kind of quotes that are inspiring. But I think Feed content is a really easy way to add that into your content. I most prefer to make a carousel out of Feed content because people are going to spend a little bit more time on it. So, that's kind of how I like to think of your Feed posts.

And then, we have Lives, which I personally love because they quite literally show what it's like to work with you, how your mannerisms are. It's unedited, which I know can feel really intimidating, but it also means you don't need to edit the video content, which is a bonus. And it kind of gives a little bit of a different feel and more of a deeper connection with collaborating with other people, if you want to go live with other people or with just deeper connecting with the people that are actually on Live with you, and it's a 2-in-1 because then it becomes an Instagram Video.

Instagram Video, I know people neglect, that's okay. It's really mainly for any longer form content or your Instagram Lives because, of course, we have Reels. And this is where you're either going to want to leverage that trending pieces of content that we know really well, musics, lip syncs, to really increase your reach and get in front of new people, which is really great for that growth goal.

But I feel like there's also been this really awesome shift away from just trending Reels and doing more show and tell type of Reels is how I like to describe them. So, either visually showing something, whether it's like a vlog or it's a demonstration or tutorial, or by actually talking or telling to the camera. So, whether it's a voiceover talking to camera, which I feel like is really a successful way to use Reels, and, essentially, it's just leveraging short form video that is going to just get the highest reach in terms of other types of video and people can really consume it in a really bite sized way.

So, I feel like when we look at all the different surfaces and then we take your content pillars, you can kind of see where some would go in maybe multiple or maybe you would just lean into certain ones. So, hopefully that breakdown was helpful.

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Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. I think that's so helpful. I think your tip about treating the Feed is kind of like the main category, and then all these others are like subcategories of it, because, yeah, you're right, as long as we can post to the Feed - like I always post every Reel to the Feed, everything - so that's taking up all these Feed slots that, in the past, didn't exist. We didn't have Reels. It's just Feed posts. I think that's super helpful.

And so, I thought it was helpful, too, you were saying that for Feed posts you like carousel posts. I always think of them, too, as shareable, that kind of stuff that gets people to engage. Do you have - I know this could be its own podcast - kind of like high level tips for people about caption writing, and what are we asking people to do? What are our calls to action when you're starting out and trying to build?

Natasha Samuel: Yes. So, I think the first most important part of your caption is like a really strong hook. That first line, you can think of it like a newsletter subject, a blog title. We wanted to essentially tell people why they should keep watching the video, scrolling through the carousel, reading the caption, or it should kind of give them a teaser to give them a reason to keep engaging with that content.

And then, we kind of get into formatting for your caption, which I feel like is a really important thing to consider. I love emojis. It seems like a silly thing, but I think it adds personality, it adds color, and it really adds context to a lot of the things that you're saying in your caption. I like to use them as bullet points. I like to use them as extra pronunciation in certain parts of my caption. I like to use caps in my captions as well as kind of little headers, and line breaks, tons of line breaks, because people can only read, like, two to three lines before it all kind of starts to blur together. So, that's kind of some formatting tips for your captions.

And then, when it comes to length, people always ask me short versus long. It's really what feels the most natural to your brand voice. So, if you feel like writing a long caption feels like the hardest thing ever, that probably isn't very natural to your brand voice and

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you might just want to keep it short and sweet. I think that works really well for a lot of different brands. But I definitely like to lean into a little bit of a longer caption because I can kind of build on what other visual I'm essentially sharing in that post.

And then, I always like to add some type of call to action. And a call to action can be to go to a link in bio to buy, subscribe, opt in. It can be something that's very strategic. But it also can just be that little nudge people need to actually engage. Because I often find, if people think they're not getting enough engagement on their posts, it's because either visually or with the actual context of the content, they're not really giving enough for people to want to engage with, which might just mean you need to tap into your ideal follower a little bit more.

But for the most part it might mean that you're just not asking for the engagement that you essentially want. So, kind of understanding what feels like the easiest type of engagement. Like, we want to make it really easy. We don't want them to think and type too hard because then they just won't do it. So, we really want to focus on what's easy and accessible, but also what makes sense for that content.

Don't just tell someone to save a piece of content if it's not something that they would actually reference later, something that's really robust that maybe they need to take action on. But if it's something where you're leaning into unpopular opinions or something that might have follow up questions, absolutely prompt and remind them to comment.

Whenever I look at my content that has the highest engagement for those specific metrics, it's because I focused on that specific metric and I asked for the engagement. And I really consistently do that even when I didn't get that type of engagement. So, that would definitely be my caption tips for everyone.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. That's really, really helpful. And I know you were talking a lot on Stories today about kind of matching the type of engagement with the type of

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content. And I think that makes a lot of sense because, at least when I was coming up in online business, it was always this drop an emoji in the comments. It was kind of these random pieces of engagement that was like, Why are they dropping an emoji? For what? What are they getting from this? So, I think that that was really making sense to me today.

I was also thinking, so your episode is airing before we have an interview coming up with Katie Steckly about YouTube and podcasts. And I was thinking about how this would be helpful to pair with what about being on Instagram and you have a podcast, like you and I do, or a YouTube channel, like you and I do because we do all the things. How do we show up on Instagram to let people know about that? Or should we even be using Instagram to drive people to those other platforms?

Natasha Samuel: Yeah. I think it absolutely depends on your goal and kind of where your main hub is. But I feel like for the most part, a lot of people like to stay where they are or they just want to know that the other platform that they connect with you on has a new piece of content. Sometimes they just need the reminder.

So, what I really like to focus on is giving each new piece of content really great promotion whenever it is live. I like to post some Stories about it and then share the promotional graphics and links. I've really enjoyed playing around with Reels for either my interviews and also solo episodes for my YouTubes. So, it kind of feels like a native piece of Instagram content and they get value out of it just by watching or reading it. But it'd also kind of be like, "Oh. This is really great. I wonder what it would be like on a different platform." So, that's personally what I found has worked really well for me.

I think another really great method is really taking those longer pieces of content or even content you're making on different platforms, like TikTok, and really using it as source content so you can kind of make it feel like it makes sense on Instagram. I'm sure both of us could brainstorm so many ideas, even just with this interview of taking the main elements we're talking about and just breaking it down into a carousel, maybe

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turning it into a livestream where I dive even deeper into a specific point.

So, I think we're often creating a lot of content in great places, and that's amazing. And so, we want to focus on promoting it when they are live and giving those the perks that they deserve. But, also, thinking of how can I take this really great idea that someone just might not want to go to YouTube over, and that's okay. And how can I make it a whole new piece of content that people can experience on Instagram and maybe even still add a call to action for YouTube or the podcast. So, that's kind of how I like to think about it.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah, that's really helpful. I was actually surprised, yesterday, we nabbed a clip of a YouTube video that I did on seven ways that you can legally reduce the amount of taxable income that you have without getting nabbed by the IRS. And we just took one of those tips and turned it into a Reel yesterday and it's actually doing really well. But we stripped all the stuff off of it that made it look like a YouTube video and everything, and did real captions and everything else on it. We just took the native video that I had already created.

Natasha Samuel: Yes. Absolutely. I think there's so many easy ways with the native tools within Instagram to make something feel like it's supposed to be an Instagram without having to do a ton of extra work.

Sam Vander Wielen: And so, for anybody listening who is more in the auditing mode of being like, "I'm already on Instagram. I'm already posting all these things. I'm trying Reels. I'm doing all the things. Why isn't it working? Why isn't anybody engaging?" If somebody was to back up and pause for a moment with Instagram, kind of come up with a new strategy, what are some of the things that you would encourage them to look for or look at in Instagram to do better moving forward?

Natasha Samuel: Definitely. I think that profile experience is really something that not enough people really focus on and look at. And what I mean by profile experience is

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understanding how when someone goes to your main Instagram page, when they're looking through all your content, what are they essentially going to do? How are they going to feel? Are they going to know enough about your brand? Because when a Reel takes off or when you get new eyeballs on your account, what are you actually doing with that reach and traffic?

And I feel like this kind of goes into this concept I like to talk about of your follower journey and really understanding how people are interacting with your brand throughout their whole journey on Instagram. The first being, thinking about when someone follows you or they don't even follow you, they're thinking about following you, they're thinking about pushing that button, what ensures that they don't completely leave your Instagram for good and that they stay on for the ride?

So, one part is full stories. People love to binge stories. It helps them get a vibe of what you're going to be like. On top of that, having highlights built out. I personally don't think you can have too many highlights, but I think they should be very specific. So, instead of just a tips highlight, have a specific highlight for a very specific tip so people can easily tap through it and consume it. I get so many replies on my highlights and it's because I use that specific technique.

And then, also, just your bio clearly saying who you are, who you help, what people are going to get from following you, and what is that next step. Is it a freebie on your website? Is it content on an outside platform? Is it your services? Is it your availability? Is it your program that's available?

And then, what your grid looks like. And I don't say that it has to be a perfectly curated way. But it has to have something that pulls everything together and gives people a visual feel of your brand. For me, it's yellow. That's kind of what holds everything together for me. But for some people it's graphics. For some people it's photos, it's video. But figuring out what that common thread is and consistently doing it, but also making it easier for people to find other content from what they may be discovered you

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on.

So, that's kind of like that first stage. And when you do all of that really well, it makes sure that you're attracting the right people and that they actually are following you.

And then, we kind of go on to that nurture stage. So, really think about your content and think about how it relates to your offers or whatever goal you have on Instagram, are you building content around that. Maybe the objections they already are having, maybe they need help identifying the problem, maybe they need to be inspired or think about something in a completely different way, or maybe they really want to be entertained and feel a little bit more lighter about the topic.

I think knowing that person that you're serving on Instagram and nurturing them really, really well means you don't even need to directly pitch to them for them to be ready to buy from you, which might take two weeks. It might take, literally, two years. You never know how long it might take for that person to convert. And maybe they never convert, but they send your Instagram profile to someone else.

And then, of course, we have that last stage, which is where maybe you're launching, maybe you have a funnel you want people to go into, or maybe you have an offer that's evergreen like a one-on-one session. And, essentially, people going like, "Okay. I'm warm. I'm ready. I know I want to work with this person." Is it easy for them to actually purchase from you? Is it linked in your LinkedIn bio? Do you have that call to action really clearly in your bio? For the people that need an extra little bit of lurking, do you have a highlight that highlights your client testimonials or what's included in your offer?

I can't tell you the amount of times where I've gone to want to buy from someone and I'm like, "Do they even sell something?" Like, I don't even know where it is? So, we can't forget about that last step. So, I feel like those are hopefully really easy changes people can make, whether maybe they already nailed the first stage, but really thinking of that

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whole journey so you can kind of check all the boxes and really have your Instagram profile and content optimized.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. That's really helpful. That's what you call your three part follower journey, right?

Natasha Samuel: Yes.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. That's super helpful. I think that will be helpful to people. I call the last one the How Can I Pay You Money Effect. Because I go to people's profiles sometimes and I feel the same way, I'm like, "So, how do I pay? Like, what do you do that I can pay you for? I don't even understand." And I think there's this whole, you know, people get so used to that Instagram bio statement that's like, "I help with these very fluffy transformational things." But I'm like, "But I don't understand what you do. Like, how do I pay you?"

Natasha Samuel: "And who you do it for? Like, is it for me? Is it for someone else?" Like, really getting specific there. I think bios and your actual profile name are places that people want to stick out and get really fluffy and have fun with, which I think there can be fun elements, but I think we really need to focus on the important things because you only have so little space.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yes. And, please, for the love of all things, put your first name in it. Sometimes people send me messages and I want to go thank them.

Natasha Samuel: No clue what their name is.

Sam Vander Wielen: Or I always use people's names and I'm like, "How are we still having this conversation?" I'm like, "Please put your name there. I don't know." And it's not in their handle. It's not like that. Yeah, that's funny. You can easily tackle that one today after listening to this.

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So, I think that it would also be helpful for you to share a little bit, you do so great with batching content, which I think speaks so much to your core value of sustainability. And not doing what we're talking about for a week, but actually committing to this for a while and seeing how it goes. So, what are some tips that you would give to people about batching?

Natasha Samuel: Definitely. So, I think the first thing is knowing how often you are going to post. Because I think we often go to batch content and we actually don't know how much content we need to batch. And this number is going to look different for everyone knowing you can always add to it, but it's more important that you can be consistent with the bare minimum.

So, it could be Stories and then, like, a handful of posts each week. It doesn't need to be daily. It doesn't need to be three times a day. If you don't want to post on weekends, you don't need to post on weekends. So, really figuring out what that looks like for you.

And then, I think another thing is having a place that you're storing and organizing your ideas and your content. This also will look different for everyone. I love Airtable. I also love ClickUp. You could do this in Google Docs or Google Sheets. You could do it in Trello, Asana, Notion. There's so many really great options and it really comes down to taking the time to really test out what tool works the best for what you need.

But you need a place for when you have those ideas to store them, because when you sit down and create content, you won't always feel creative, they won't always be flowing, but there's constantly inspiration all around us. So, we need to make sure that we're actively storing it.

And then, a place that we're organizing. I love to outline my content of like, what am I saying in my Lives? What am I saying in my Reels? So, just having a hub for at least those two things is really going to help you batch.

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And then, definitely just making the space and time to do it for yourself. Especially for fellow content creators and social media managers, it's so easy to do this for your clients and brands you're partnering with, and all those things, and forget to do it for yourself. But whether it's a day every month, a day every week, a few hours every week, whatever you can maintain consistently, but kind of give yourself that business self-care of like, "I'm sitting down and creating content. I'm feeling inspired. I'm not rushing it. I'm not trying to scramble and put something on Instagram randomly," really helps you, not only be more strategic because you're seeing all your content as a whole, but at least get a week ahead.

That's really my final tip, is, knowing that batching doesn't have to mean batching 60 days of content because some people's brains just don't work like that. It could be a week of content and that still would free you up so much time and energy. So, yeah, hopefully those tips will help when people are wanting to batch and prep their content.

Sam Vander Wielen: That is really helpful. And I think it's helpful to hear that it's not so black and white of you have to batch like 800 months ahead of time. And I tend to be somebody who I get inspired, but to Natasha's point, I also keep a running list of ideas in Asana, and I actually break them out by category. So, I have like ideas section for YouTube videos or for Instagram or for my email list of emails I want to send. And that - she is right - makes it so much better when you sit down to batch all this stuff. So, definitely you can implement that today, too, that's for sure.

And so, I was thinking, you know, as somebody was listening to this, they might think like, "Are we supposed to be kind of constantly reiterating on Instagram?" If somebody was to walk away from this episode, even you've given them so many good tips that someone could implement a strategy from what you've shared today, should they try that and stick to it for a certain period of time? And if not, what should they be looking at over that period of time to adjust?

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Natasha Samuel: Definitely. So, it starts back to that goal you have. Is it growing? Is it nurturing? And then, giving your strategy a little bit of time, at least two solid months, if not three, would be ideal to just give it time. Because sometimes new things really takes time for you to get the data that you need and also for Instagram and your own audience to kind of adapt to that change.

So, definitely give it a good amount of time and then just go inside Instagram and look at your insights and analyze. Like, put on your marketing hat, even if you've never put one on, and just start to ask questions. That's how I like to analyze my content. I go to my insights, I look at my overall growth of my actual audience, and I look at my engagement, I look at my reach. Those are the three main sections that I like to go in to really just look at all that data and ask why. Why was that going? Was it the time of day? Was it how often I was posting? Was it the type of content I was creating? Was it the change that I implemented? And kind of see how things are looking.

And then, I also like to go into individual pieces of content as well and look at those insights and see those exact metrics and ask all those questions. Because it could be that Instagram was rolling out a really big update and your engagement was low because that is absolutely what happens. It happened to me last week, literally, Stories, Views were in the dumps because they were rolling out story likes and that's just how it rolls. My story views are back to normal.

So, I think it's also understanding that Instagram, social media in general will change ebb and flow, but also just really analyzing and asking questions on the visual, the way you wrote the caption. And also knowing, by going back into all that content, you can repurpose, you can revise things, you can give it new life. It doesn't mean you posted it and now it's wasted down the drain. Get in the habit of not only reviewing but also retrying things because it might work better the second time.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. I really like the idea of just trying to be a scientist and asking questions, playing with it, having fun, not taking it so seriously. I also often think

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about how I'm not entitled to any sort of results based on effort, or I'm not entitled to the platform showing my stuff, or I'm not entitled to growth. Like, I'm there. It's a free platform. It's incredible what we do get from it. I just try to be pretty appreciative and then adjust. I'm just along for the ride.

Natasha Samuel: Yes. We all are.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. I'm like, "I guess so. Oh, there's something new. Okay." It's like every day. But I guess to that effect, too, do you have any tips for people on burnout on Instagram in particular?

Natasha Samuel: Yeah. I think that taking a break is always healthy, and it could be for a long weekend, it could be for a decent amount of time. But I think that taking breaks, ideally, we'd love to pre-plan our breaks and being like, "Hey, I'm going to be on vacation or I'm going to be outside of a launch. I want to take a few days off of Instagram." Pre-planned intentional breaks is ideal so we can work towards that. But just take some time off. Absolutely. Set some boundaries.

I always like to say that Instagram should be within your office hours. So, when you log in and when you log off, try to keep your Instagram time between that and think about it like a task that you're doing in your business. If you would be doing it at all hours of the day, taking away from other things that are important, it might mean you just need to step back a little bit.

And also knowing you have a lot of control over your social media experience. You can unfollow. You can mute. You can block. There's so many ways that you can curate your space so you're consuming content. Even though we don't want to consume too much, we're consuming content, but only content that feels really good and helpful for our ultimate goals and the connections we want to make on the app.

So, I feel like those things have been really helpful and the most actionable thing is - if

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you have an iPhone or I know they have the same settings on Android - go in, look at your downtime settings, look at your do not disturb settings, your time limits. There's so many great things you can set up that will literally tell you to stop doing things on social media, which is always really helpful for me. So, yeah, that's definitely what I like to do.

Sam Vander Wielen: Do you have a time limit app set for Instagram?

Natasha Samuel: Yes. I have one set for Instagram for two hours and TikTok for 30 minutes.

Sam Vander Wielen: That's a good idea.

Natasha Samuel: We need to have it low because if we go back an hour, it's a rabbit hole.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. That's what I hear from people. They're like, "I just got pulled into TikTok for, like, hours." I'm like, "Oh, my God." That's so funny. Yeah. Yeah. Thank goodness for those controls, I suppose.

So, today you and I were talking before we hopped on, I think it would be really helpful for you just to share your insights or tips that you have on how we navigate social media as business owners in the midst of a crisis, a social justice movement, the world feeling very heavy. And I know a lot of people are just not sure how to show up on social media and feel like no matter how somebody does show up, there tends to be very strong opinions on both sides about how they're doing it wrong. So, I would just love to hear your thoughts on that.

Natasha Samuel: Yeah. I think it kind of starts from a place of pausing, I think, is the most important thing. And I think back to when I was a social media manager, that was the first thing I ever did. I didn't react. I didn't create a post. I didn't freak out. I really just paused, which meant quite literally pausing my content, but also just taking a step back

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to absorb what I needed to, but also to take a little bit of a mental break from it all. Because you never make your best decisions when you are stressed, emotional, and not in a good state anyway, which we don't want to be. We don't want to be reactive.

And then, I think what's so important is to lean into what your brand values are, which very well might overlap with your personal values. And know that whatever you feel and want to share is worth sharing. And that it is okay if you might need to take feedback from people and learn. And that there isn't a perfect way to talk about anything. There's never going to be one perfect way in any situation, no matter what side of the card you fall on.

So, I think accepting that, taking a stand, speaking up on something, pivoting something in lieu of what's happening in the world is always better than not speaking up, especially when it's aligned with something that feels like it's at your core values. But I really think that pausing and being just socially aware is so important.

I think with everything that's going on right now with the war in Ukraine and Russia, I saw something the other day of a creator kind of saying something along the lines - I think we've all seen a lot of quite insensitive things - of like, "I just hope Russia just backs off." And I'm just like, "That maybe wasn't the right response to say for a lot of different reasons."

So, I think just being thoughtful when responding and then knowing that things sometimes have to go back to "normal" at one point. Like, you can do whatever you can, say what you need to say, and then know that things have to keep moving. You have to keep launching, selling, running business, living life. So, yeah, that's my, like, imperfect advice and take on it because it's a weird situation to navigate for all of us.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah, for sure. I think the pausing is so helpful. And I think it's just helpful for you to share that there's not a perfect way. And it also feels like such a fine line and a balance of saying something and being socially aware and standing with your

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values, both personal and business, and also not shifting into a political correspondent every time something's going on.

Like, I'm not looking to the people who I follow on Instagram who are business coaches or - I don't know - marketing experts, YouTube experts, I'm not looking to them to be like, "So, what's going on in the Ukraine?" I will go to my news sources for this. But to know that those people acknowledge it, to your point, and that they're not being so insensitive. I've seen some things that I've felt a little like there was just a lack of acknowledgement which made me feel like you're a bit out of touch. And that just then wouldn't align with me wanting to work with that person. It doesn't make them a bad person. It's just not who I'd want to pay money, I suppose.

But I know a lot of friends have shared that they feel this pressure to then speak about it constantly, to be giving running updates, or just sharing tons of graphics. You see at this time, everybody just turns to re-sharing posts on Stories.

Natasha Samuel: I think it just comes down to saying what you feel like you need to say about the situation. And then, knowing that eventually you have to move on. And that if you get negative feedback for whatever reason, that's okay. They're probably not a good fit for your community anyway. And I know it's hard to take and absorb, but it goes back to that there's never a right way.

I mean, even like this is a not as hard hitting issue, but I do a clothing rental because I'm a content creator. I do a lot of speaking and I'm still figuring out my personal style. So, it feels like one of the more sustainable options in terms of clothing, my personal choice. And even with that choice, I get people telling me that it's a horrible company and that I shouldn't do that, and that's actually not better for the environment. So, even with things that aren't as important as a war, people aren't always going to agree with you. And that's okay knowing that deep down inside, if you feel like this is my values, this what feels good, I'm going to say it and be at peace with that, then that's all you have to do. You're good. You can move on.

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Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah, exactly. Call it a day. Yes. This is like when I would post about my dad having cancer and people would be like, "He shouldn't be eating that. He really shouldn't be having sugar." And I'd be like, "Well, he has terminal cancer, so we're going to eat this banana cream pie and we're going to call it a day. But thanks for your opinion."

Natasha Samuel: Yes, exactly.

Sam Vander Wielen: Now, I actually put a little disclaimer, "I'm not looking for feedback on my father's nutritional habits."

Natasha Samuel: Yeah. And I think that also speaks to being a thoughtful consumer. Like, even before I had a "following," I remember you'd see something and maybe you'd ask for a link or you'd want to give a suggestion. And you have to realize, like, would you randomly poke someone in the grocery store line and say, "Actually, you shouldn't be eating that." And people do that, which is a whole other thing.

But when we shift how we think about it on Instagram, we realize that I even could be a better consumer in a lot of ways of how I reach out to people or how I message people. Because sometimes people feel like you know someone or feel like you're able to speak on something even from a great place, and that maybe we kind of just need to write the message and just delete it, and then just keep on tapping, keep on scrolling through. I think it also speaks to that as well because I think sometimes we don't even notice it that we maybe could engage better as well.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah, for sure. That's really helpful. All right. Well, before we close out today, I have a couple of fun Q&A's if you're up for it. So, Would You Rather's.

Natasha Samuel: Cool.

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Sam Vander Wielen: So, would you rather read fiction or nonfiction?

Natasha Samuel: Fiction.

Sam Vander Wielen: Have you read anything lately that you've loved?

Natasha Samuel: Not even that I've loved worth noting. I'm discovering some new weeds.

Sam Vander Wielen: Shopping for it.

Natasha Samuel: Yeah.

Sam Vander Wielen: All right. I highly recommend Black Cake. I'm reading it right now. It's real good. I highly recommend. Well, I think I know the answer to this one, but would you rather live at the beach, the mountains, or the desert?

Natasha Samuel: I'm going to say the mountains.

Sam Vander Wielen: I thought you were going to say beach, for sure.

Natasha Samuel: I know. No. I can't imagine not living near the water, but there's something about the mountains. So, that's more of a desire. You know, you want what you don't have, I guess you could say.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. You grew up around it, so you're used to it. So, you could try something different now. Has there been any place that you've been to that was, like, really mountainous that you loved?

Natasha Samuel: Oh, Washington State. I loved it. Oh, my gosh. I want to move every day but it's kind of on the whole other side of the country.

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Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. That whole thing. I hear it's crazy expensive, too, and very hard to find housing, but that's like everywhere now. Well, I have to add an option to this one, but would you rather order coffee, tea, or in your case, matcha.

Natasha Samuel: Matcha. I would say matcha. When I am drinking out, though, I often will get a latte. I do love a good latte.

Sam Vander Wielen: You drink coffee? That's breaking news.

Natasha Samuel: I drink coffee, but I love an at-home matcha. So, at-home, matcha. Out and about, a latte.

Sam Vander Wielen: What's your latte order? Just like a plain latte or do you put anything?

Natasha Samuel: Milk latte, yeah. Just basic.

Sam Vander Wielen: That's good. That sounds good. This one's very controversial to everyone who's been on the podcast, when you cook, do you clean up as you go or clean up at the end?

Natasha Samuel: We should ask Marlon what I do. I try to clean up as I go. That is the intention, yes.

Sam Vander Wielen: Whether or not that's always the end result, that's yet to be determined.

Natasha Samuel: Yes.

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Sam Vander Wielen: All right. So, Marlon, he can submit his formal response to us so we'll include it. And last but not least, would you rather hit up a fancy restaurant or the best food truck?

Natasha Samuel: Best food truck, easily. Oh, yeah.

Sam Vander Wielen: So good. I know. Are there good ones in Florida that you like?

Natasha Samuel: Yes. We actually just went to a whole taco festival full of food trucks.

Sam Vander Wielen: That sounds amazing.

Natasha Samuel: Full of taco food trucks. It was amazing. It was my dream.

Sam Vander Wielen: Yeah. That sounds like an amazing food truck heaven. That's awesome. All right. Well, before you go, I would love for you to share with everyone where they can find you. And, also, you were telling me earlier that you have a little something fun to share with them.

Natasha Samuel: Yeah. So, you definitely can find me over on Instagram, @shinewithnatasha. I also have a podcast, the Shine Online Podcast. And then, I have a free resource that's a video lesson all about how to repurpose content, which I know we briefly touched on today. But it'll be really helpful on breaking down what are those steps you need to do to take past content and turn it into fresh new content really intentionally. So, you can check that out in the show notes.

Sam Vander Wielen: Perfect. Yeah. We'll include all of the links. And I think that will be perfect to helping everybody implement the strategy of not burning out, being sustainable today is repurposing content. So, definitely check that out. I'll make sure we have all the links. Thank you so much, Natasha, for doing this. This was so fun.

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Natasha Samuel: Yeah. Thanks for having me.

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