



Episode 231:

The Future of Online Business: 4 Game-Changing Trends You Need to Know in 2025

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According to Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, more than 50 % of the content people see on Instagram is now AI recommended. Why does that not feel like a surprise?

You're definitely not alone in feeling like it's been a weird couple of months on social media with apps disappearing and reappearing, the social policing of who should be talking about what, when on social media, new features bursting into the scene, seemingly overnight, the list goes on. Social media is exhausting and I do think it has reached this kind of weird tipping point.

Personally, I would say that if me and social media were in a dating, relationship of some sort in 2007 and we needed to put a relationship status on Facebook, I would say it's complicated. I feel like that's kind of been my answer for the last at least one to two years. But personally, I'm pretty tired of getting yanked around on social media. You know, I, from a business perspective, I don't let myself get too swayed because I'm like, I'm always here to encourage you to build your house on land you own versus rented land, rented land being social media.

So I try not to get too fussed about this stuff while keeping my eyes at the same time about like what's going on. But I'm also a human and I'm a business owner who's built a lot of my business on social media, whether I like it or not, right? Social is still how a lot of people find me. It's still how a lot of people try to contact me. Like even when they have my email, they DM me. I mean, some of my friends who have my phone numbers still DM me instead of texting me. And so it just, it's the world that we live in, right?

I'm very much on a like, you know, take what you need, leave the rest kind of journey. And I think that's where I'm at personally with trying to find my way with social media, where I'm like, how does this feel good to me and support my business while also like, what are the parts I can leave behind and which parts am I willing to sacrifice, even if it does impact my business? But that's kind of what, you know, I would just say how I'm feeling about it on the personal side.

But I wanted to do an episode for you today more about the trends that I'm actually seeing in the social media landscape with online businesses overall in 2025, where I think things are headed because I think we are at a tipping point, like a big, big tipping point. And I think things are about to break. We've had a couple of big like splits in the online business hemisphere over the years.

I think one was in 2020, there was probably like another one a year or two ago, but I don't think actually that they are as big as the ones that we're going to feel now.

So with that, let's get into the four trends that I think are going on in the online business world in 2025 and what you have in store for you. Let me do that again, because that's not the thing. With that, let's get into the four future online business trends that I'm betting on that you're going to see everywhere in 2025.

Trend number one, AI. I mean, it feels obvious. It feels like everybody's talking about it. Now here's the deal with AI. I feel like sometimes nowadays you're hearing everything's just called AI. and people are definitely slapping the AI label on everything they can because it's trendy. So I think part of the trend you're going to see is more and more people coming out with AI programs, with micro tools, with customized Chat GPTs, like all of this kind of stuff, right? You're definitely going to see an expansion of this, but I also think you're going to continue to see this kind of like unruly slapping on of the AI label.

I saw a vacuum cleaner the other day that said it was AI. I was like, come on guys. It's just like, because it has like some smart functionality or like connects to WiFi doesn't make it AI. And so I think that you're going to continue to see the usage of this in terms of from a marketing perspective, but you're also going to see the continued use and expansion of use of this as creators, right, for yourself. I think it's gone beyond just content writing, right?

I think when it first kind of rolled into the scene, especially last year in 2024, it's starting to come out of like, look guys, AI can write your blog posts, it can write your social captions, like it can do all of these things. But now I'm starting to see even from some of the people like I'm in a mastermind with, who are working on products that are creating entire business models or are acting as people's assistants that are crafting all the responses to their customer service inquiries. I mean, obviously people can even use it to create podcasts like this, like not just the outline for it or the script for it or the show notes, which is kind of feels like 2024, but in 2025, I feel like, you you might start seeing people actually creating podcasts using their voice to create a podcast or reading Substacks aloud, for example. Those features are already pretty widely available on several platforms. So like I said, I think not only will we see in 2025 and expansion of the use and misuse of this label, but we're also going to see the use of AI expanding in online businesses beyond just content writing.

Trend number two, video content will continue to rule the day, especially on platforms like Instagram. However, I think that the way that this trend is actually going in 2025 is that the video content is moving away from those micro seven second clips of like, where you've got to get in a fast tip or you're just like dancing around and all of the info's in the caption. And I do think some of the, I don't know, feeling and the trend of what I was talking about at the top of the episode of just like social feeling a little loud, social feeling a little messy and noisy is starting this trend of like maybe a little slower content. And maybe this is just for a certain, I don't know, sect of people who are tired of social media and some of the antics on social media. But I do think that

it's going to be trendy in 2025 to slow down a little bit, to give people more information and to get people to know you a little bit better through these videos versus just trying to throw something out there to be viral. It does seem to me at least like on platforms like Instagram, videos are going to continue to reign over things like carousels and static posts and other forms of communication.

Now on the flip side, what I think is really funny is that another trend, that's been happening now for a while and I see is going to continue happening in 2025 is that video is not popular on Instagram stories, at least long talking head videos. Those seem to be very, very out, at least for me and for a lot of other people I know who were kind of more used to marketing our businesses on Instagram in that way of like going on Instagram stories, doing several what we call talking head, just your face to camera, long, know, usually maxing out the minute in each story. Those just don't seem to be working. It seems like across the board, Instagram stories, views and engagement are way down for creators across the board on Instagram. Unless Instagram decides to change something on their end, which means is the problem with social media. We never know when or if they could do that, but unless they change something with, I don't know the way that they prioritize or push certain people's stories, I can see that it's going to continue to hurt you to have lots and lots of video in your stories.

Just because I don't wanna leave you hanging, because I hate when people give you tips and I'm like, this thing is not working, but then you're like, well, what is working? So before we go on to the third trend, I just wanna say that what I think is going to continue to be the trend with stories, that's because they're not video, it's not working is just going to be treating them more like stories. It's going to be having kind of these concise several sides that tell a beginning, a middle, and end, treat every story like it's a story. Some text, not too much, a little bit behind the scenes, mixing up the media, but play with it and see what works for you.

The third online business trend I'm predicting in 2025 is that we are going in a less educational and more connection behind the scenes vulnerability, authenticity, direction. When I started in online business in 2016, 2017, it was very popular and remained popular for a long time to do the bulk of your content as five tips to do this, three things you need to know about that, five ways to do this. That content I do not think is currently performing that well for most creators. And I think it's going to only continue to get worse. It's not that you're not going to be able to lead or you should not lead with education or like helpful useful information for your audience in 2025. I think that 2025 though is going to push you to have to think about this differently.

So I think that you're going to have to position it instead of that three tips to do this, it's going to mean more things that are showing it, maybe showing an example of what you do and then translating that to an educational tip. Or it's going to be sharing some kind of story, more story driven. I think also the kind of thought leader hot take authority building type of content is going to be more popular than the straight up like here's just like three things that you need to do and move on. I think people want a little bit more than that. I think they get a little tired of it. And I just think that they're hit with a lot of information. Like people can get information. I nowadays you

have to think of it this way. Like people are going to Chat GPT to get answers. Like I know a lot of people who are using Chat GPT as like Google essentially.

And so people can get information, they can get answers, but I think people are starving for personal connection. It's why I think that, you know, when I started my online business, there was this kind of weird relationship with sharing personal stuff, like, you know, your love for cooking or your travels or something that was like totally unrelated to whatever you sell. Like there were a lot of thoughts about that, about like, don't share too much, like share just a little, but don't share too much. And I almost feel like the scales are balancing out a little bit more now where what's going on in the online business industry is actually requiring the sharing of more of that part of you.

And I still think you can tie it and should tie it back to your business and back to what you do. But there's definitely not this like 90 % share about your business or your niche, 10 % show a little window into your life. I think those percentages are getting closer and closer together in the trend that I'm predicting in 2025 is that we're going to get less straight up educational and leaning more on this connection point, getting people really familiar with you and what you do so that the next natural step is for them to work with you. But maybe we don't hit them so hard over the head with it.

The fourth future online business trend I'm predicting in 2025 is that transparency, quality, ethics, and knowing somebody who knows you or has worked with you is going to rule the day. I think that basically I would summarize this trend as consumers have gotten savvy. They've gotten savvy about everything from the products to working with coaches to webinars to freebies to ManyChat like people know what you're doing, right? So when you say like, just click here and I want to send you a DM or whatever, they know where it's going. They know that it's a bot. They know when they watch your webinar that at the end you're going to pitch them something. So I think it's only become more more important that we are transparent about what we're doing. This is why I always tell people like, sign up for my free workshop. At the end, you're going to learn about the Ultimate Bundle®. It's my best selling legal products, know, blah, blah, blah. So I am very upfront about it.

But I also think that because of that, it has required, and I think this is a good thing in the long run, but it has required the online business industry to step up its game. So I don't think moving forward that the people who offer crappy products, crappy customer service, they don't really know what they're talking about because all they have ever done is just maybe built themselves something and they don't really understand, as I always say, the mechanism of like how and why they built it that way and why it actually worked. They can't replicate it for other people. I think that's on its way out. I think that what happens when an industry gets crowded and starts to get full, right?

And a lot of people come in. I do think that the cream will rise to the top. And unfortunately what that does is squeeze out the bottom, right? It's gonna squeeze out the people who aren't

offering quality products, who don't provide great customer service, who aren't easy to get in touch with, whose messaging is not very clear about what they do, where they can't talk to anybody who's ever worked with you. It's kind of like a culty situation behind the scenes. I think it's only going to become more more important that people know people who have worked with you and that they have some sort of, I don't know, word of mouth connection.

I think that this also going to this trend is also going to lead us down a direction in 2025, especially based on a lot of the other things that we've talked about so far in this episode that people are going to start. think business owners themselves are going to start seeking connection and community and marketing their businesses offline. I think that a lot of what I'm saying is going to lead people in that direction because it's very hard to get to know someone just through an Instagram, you know, platform or if somebody doesn't respond to their own DMs or, whatever, but you can create a much faster connection when you meet somebody in person. I've always been a really big fan of this kind of hybrid model. Like I've always said that online businesses don't only have to be marketed online. You can do your work online without having to only market your business online.

And I think 2025 is going to push people because they're sick of social media, because there is too much noise here, right? Because certain platforms are going away because certain platforms are just falling out of favor, I think people are sick of it. Actually, I want to read you something I got yesterday I have to read you. In support of what I'm talking about in this trend, I have to read you a thread I saw yesterday from the creator, Dana James Mulongi on Threads. I just thought this was brilliant.

Dana wrote: "Start going back to coffee with business owners in real life. Start going to conferences to meet new people, not just the speakers. Start blogging again, get back on your YouTube channel, complete your Google business profile, enter your business into every directory that you can. We have abandoned alternative ways of marketing and it's time to get back into it."

Ugh, Dana, round of applause. I was like, as soon as I saw that, I sent that to my director of operations, Lindsey, and I was like, yes, this is like, Dana just put into words exactly what I've been thinking, but also a trend that I'm seeing already and that I think is only going to increase in 2025.

Okay, so those are the trends, but then what does that mean that you should do to prepare or adapt for those trends? Let's go through each of them in turn.

Now for AI, there's not really anything you can do about it if you don't like it. However, I'm a big fan, you know, of continuing to put out higher quality than quantity content, which I think is only going to come from you. Yes, I know that you can train models and do all of these things and like they can get pretty specific and that's fantastic. But if you like to write, if you're relying on your writing as a means to hook potential customers, and I think we kind of have to do that

ourselves.

However, I do think that there's a place for AI. I like using it for things like idea generation, for titles of things, for even some topics and like little brainstorm. I've been doing like little brainstorming sessions with it. And like everything, you know, I always recommend look at stuff on there and don't take it as gospel, right? Like I do these little like info, I don't know, brainstorming sessions with it sometimes when I need to come up with a topic for something and I take little bits and pieces of each one and I like piece them together and I take a word from this title and a phrase from that title or it sparks an idea and I take it in a different direction, I make it my own. Like it doesn't have to be so all or nothing. I think the trend could also be like, sure, AI becomes a part of your business, but we use it like an assistant, not the leader.

When it comes to trend number two and video still remaining supreme, I would say that the way I would prepare and adapt for this to continue to be the most important way to market your business, at least on social media, is to drop perfection. I mean, that's really the only way when people ask me like, how do you do all these reels or how do you do all this and how to do that? It's honestly reducing the filming schedule so that I'm just doing like one or two batches of time where I'm sitting down and and recording those batches of videos.

But it's also just being like, you know what? I don't need to look perfect. My background doesn't need to look perfect. don't I can mess up and say, well, sorry. No, I meant that it's OK. It's OK. And so I think in a world where that is going to continue to be the trend, you have to trend more away from perfectionism and more towards embracing the you know what? This is good enough. And it's actually good enough is probably great. And that's gonna help you with the other trends that we talked about of being more, you know, transparent and down to earth and offering connection to your audience.

For trend number three on connection instead of all of this educational content, I think you can prepare for that by starting to play with what it would be like to do content that is fun to you again. I just want you to play with it and imagine a world where it doesn't have to be so one or the other, where it's either straight educational, where you're starting out and being like, I am a X that helps people with X and this is my product and blah blah blah or just you know a picture of your meal that day. What about something in the middle where we try to play with it, have fun with your content again while also sneakily working in there what you do and how you help people and what you sell. Just not hitting people so hard over the head with it. Like that would be an interesting thing to play with.

I know for me I can just give you a personal example of the way that I'm approaching this trend is that I'm trying to think of approaching the same topic or the same content that I might have an idea to do an episode on instead of just being like, this is six ways you should do this. I'm approaching it more from what's a way that I think differently about this thing. What's something that I wish people knew about this thing? What's something that I really disagree with about the way people traditionally think things need to be done around this topic, right? That actually

came from my friend, Natasha Samuel from Shine With Natasha.

When I was telling her, I was all up in my head about the shift away from educational content or just relying on it so heavily. And I was like, I'm overthinking it. And she gave me some of these great prompts that just brought this, I don't know, aha moment. So I'm hoping it'll help you too.

I think you just generally have to find the way in your online business to show the personal side or to share a part of yourself or a part of a hobby or something like that without becoming an influencer. I feel like that's kind of the balance is like, I don't need to share my outfits every day. Nobody wants them, but I don't need to share them every day or like the links to everything or teach people how to make coffee. Like I can just show little parts of myself and still connect with my audience.

Finally, on the transparency and the quality front, I agree with my mom on this one that I just think that so many things in life would be made simpler if we just focused on actually doing good work and taking the time to be good at what we do. If we really care about the experience and the quality of the product or the service that you're offering and, you know, although you cannot control everyone's happiness and you're always going to, and that's not your responsibility, like you're always going to have people who will be dissatisfied even if you did every single thing for them in the universe, you still can offer a really good experience and know that you've created a good product. After that, what people do with it, not so much your problem.

I write about that a lot in the book, in my book, *When I Start My Business, I'll Be Happy*, but you want to really make sure that you offer a good product or a good service. We don't have to also be in such a rush, right? These, like the skills that we are offering people, the businesses that we're building, they take time. And I think that focusing on getting really good results for your customers will bring you so many more customers in the long run than any one quick social post could in your lifetime.

So I really want to know from you, which one of these trends are you leaning into this year? Which of the four are you leaning into more AI video content, less educational content or the focusing on quality over quantity trend? Or is there a trend that I missed that you think is going to be big in 2025? I want to hear from you.

So DM me on Instagram @samvanderwielen or hit reply to my email and let me know which of these trends you're leaning into. If there's one that I missed, I want to hear how you liked this episode.

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