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Be a Virtual Owl



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Tips and insights from Charlotte Howell, Creative Director of Virtual Owl Marketing

What should your dance school be doing on social media in 2021?

Ever feel like you can't keep up with the latest algorithms or trends? Social media is changing all the time and has gone through a significant period of growth as a result of the pandemic, as everyone moved online and utilised social media to feel connected.

So what should you be doing to optimise your social media profiles for 2021 to help you achieve your marketing objectives and raise your profile?

Start doing now!

- **Engagement, engagement, engagement!**

Engage with your community. Facebook and Instagram have both talked about the importance of community in their future visions. Like, comment, share and save posts. Spend time on your accounts daily and engage with at least 5 posts before doing anything on your profiles. Respond to your audience. Social media platforms will reward you with this by boosting your posts and increasing your reach as you are helping them create conversations and build a community. Share posts and stories that you are tagged in and connect with local groups online. Lastly, follow accounts that are relevant to you: local business, dance account or someone you have worked with.

- **Produce more video content.**

The creator of Instagram was quoted saying that Instagram is moving to a more video led model. Don't panic this does not mean images will be redundant and he has since reclarified his statement but it is clear that audiences engage more with video content. It is also favoured by algorithms on all platforms. You only have to look at the success of reels. On that note make sure you are adding reels to your Instagram account. They should be an integral part of your social media strategy and relevant for your target audience e.g. if your school is mainly exam based a reel detailing some exam tips for parents and students. You can use reels to showcase a dancer/ dance or throwback to past memories.

- **Live streams are here to stay.**

People love to see the face behind a business and more than ever with dance schools customers buy in to the individual as well as the service. You could invite a well-



known figure on your page for a live interview, announce award winners live or simply just update your audience on news in the dance school.

- **Be consistent with Instagram stories.**

You should have something on your Instagram story daily. Share your favourite reels, new post notifications or do a teacher takeover. Keep content varied. Use stickers to encourage engagement i.e. polls, question stickers and countdowns. It is also recommended to do a talking story for about 1min a day. Obviously this may not always be possible but the more you can talk to your audience the more exposure your dance school will get. Also, again people see the face behind the brand. It can be as simple as a hello or

you talking through an upcoming event/ new class at your school. Anything goes. Be you and be authentic.

- **Get involved with social commerce.**

Facebook has recently upgraded its Shops service as this area continues to grow. Make sure you have a shop set up if you sell merchandise or uniform. You will see an increase in sales and your customers will enjoy the ease of accessibility. More features have been added to enhance the user experience such as product tags and easy check out. Did you know 54% of social media users research products using social media?

- **Always add a call to action**

Encourage your audience to interact with your post. Examples of calls to action are; click on this website link to find out more, buy now, or sign up. It's a good way to measure the success of a post and also increase your conversion.

- **Use hashtags.**

It has been proven that posts containing hashtags get over 12% more interaction. There is so much to say about hashtags and I will talk about this in the next issue of Dance International but initially the key is to experiment and trial different hashtags. Hashtags can be added to your post or put in the comments. The hashtags selected are reflective of the theme or content of a post so that social media users can use the search function to find content relevant to them e.g. #dancelifestyle, #dancetraining. Although used on Facebook they have more impact on Instagram. One of the most important things is to avoid

using banned hashtags. Banned hashtags are hashtags that Instagram users have reported because the posts using them go against Instagram guidelines. One example of a banned hashtag that dance schools might use is #costumes. You will know a hashtag is banned as when you search it on Instagram a message appears on the hashtag's page explaining that recent posts are hidden. A post containing a banned hashtag is restricted and hidden from the Explore page. This hurts your organic reach and growth as people who don't follow you won't see your post. As I said there is so much to learn about hashtags so keep an eye out for the next issue of Dance International to find out more.

So that leads us to what to stop doing:

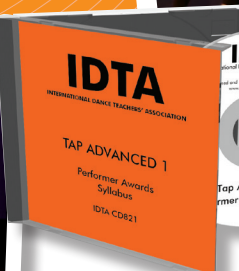
Stop worrying! I speak to so many clients who are feeling overwhelmed and are finding social media consuming. Don't try and do everything. STRATEGISE. Take a less is more approach. It is better to have quality rather than quantity. Look at your target this month and focus on that i.e. promoting an event at your dance school, running a campaign for your audience to get involved in to raise brand awareness or just learn a new social media skill e.g. reels. One target not to focus on is followers. There are not the most important measure of how successful your social media strategy is. Reach is your golden ticket. This is going to tell you how successful your content is. How many people are seeing what your dance school offers?

Most of all have fun! Social media is meant to be enjoyable. Take the pressure off and make your social media your own!

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