5-week Social Media Marketing Bootcamp – Week 5

Note: An AI colleague produced this summary of the course☺

This is a summary of the main points covered in week five of the Social Media Marketing Bootcamp organised by Local Enterprise Office South Cork, delivered by Evan Mangan, along with a list of action points for participants.

Detailed Course Summary

This session was the final (Week 5) instalment of a five-week social media marketing bootcamp organized by the Local Enterprise Office South Cork. Evan covered three main topics: TikTok, advanced video editing using the Edits app, and the advanced use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) through deep research and projects.

I. TikTok for Business

The session began with an acclimatization to TikTok, as most participants indicated they had not used the app for business. Evan emphasized that TikTok is now mainstream, boasting over a billion users globally (compared to Twitter's 480 million and Snapchat's 300 million). In Ireland, usage was previously recorded at 30%, with an estimated current usage around 40–45%. Although 80% of users are under 40, people over 40 (like Evan's mother-in-law) are also using the platform, typically just watching videos.

Platform Mechanics and Account Setup:

- TikTok is centred around short, portrait videos, often featuring music from its extensive library, which was the first to strike deals with record labels. The platform is so influential that other networks, particularly Instagram (Reels), have copied it entirely.
- The primary feed is "For You" (FYP), driven by AI recommending content based on learned niche interests (e.g., golf, air frying), mostly from accounts the user is *not* following. Other feeds include "Following" and "Friends".

- When setting up an account, Evan strongly advised using an email or phone number rather than a Facebook login for security. He also recommended reserving the mobile phone number for the primary marketing account, as this allows TikTok to suggest the account to people in the user's phone contacts (a significant marketing benefit).
- Accounts are public by default. Users wishing to stay "under the radar" should switch to a private account, which hides content from feeds and search results.
- **Business Accounts:** While a personal account offers better music licensing (access to Ed Sheeran, Harry Styles, etc.), a business account provides slightly better insights and a web address field on the profile.
- **TikTok Shop:** This is the key incentive for switching to a business account. TikTok Shop allows businesses selling physical products (if they can prove they are an Irish business) to upload products and sell directly on the platform, with TikTok taking an 8–10% commission. Videos can be linked directly to the featured product, creating "very little friction" for buyers. Creators can also act as affiliates, earning commissions (e.g., 5% to 50%) for promoting shop products.

The TikTok Algorithm (Marketing Perspective):

- The fundamental difference from Facebook and Instagram is that content does not depend on followers; a new video is initially shown to around 500 people.
- The AI scans the video content (including transcription of speech) to determine the topic, regardless of hashtags or captions.
- If people watch past the first 3 seconds, engage (like, save, comment), or visit the profile, the AI identifies the content as interesting and shows it to more people, potentially leading to viral reach (e.g., 20,000 views).
- Evan stressed that businesses must choose a niche topic and "absolutely stick to it" to build a reputation with the AI as a "reputable producer" of content within that topic.

II. Advanced Video Editing with Edits

After the break, Evan introduced **Edits**, a standalone, 100% free video editing app launched by Meta (Instagram's parent company) to compete directly with TikTok's sister app, CapCut.

Key Features of Edits:

- Users must log in with an Instagram account, which grants access to saved Reels, collections, and account insights directly within the app.
- Unlike the native Instagram editor, Edits saves video projects, allowing users to return and modify content even weeks later.
- **AI Editing Tool:** A highly useful feature is **Cut Silences**, which automatically removes awkward silent pauses at the beginning and end of clips, significantly speeding up the editing process.
- **Overlay/B-Roll:** Evan demonstrated how to create high-quality videos (especially those featuring a person talking to the camera) by using the **Overlay** feature. This allows users to layer relevant visual footage (e.g., food dishes, product demonstrations) on top of the main talking-head video, maintaining visual interest and showcasing the product. Evan recommended capturing this secondary footage in **portrait** orientation.
- **Captions:** The app auto-generates captions, which Evan emphasized must be proofread and corrected (e.g., removing conversational filler words like "eh" or changing "wanna" to "want to"). Captions can also be styled with different fonts and colours.

- Videos created in Edits can be exported and downloaded to the phone (without a watermark) for sharing on any platform, or shared directly to Instagram or Facebook.

III. Advanced AI: Deep Research and Projects

Evan detailed the evolution of AI usage, moving beyond simple, quick, tailored answers (achieved via Custom Instructions and Thinking Models) to more profound strategic tools.

Deep Research:

- Deep research is an iterative process that takes over 10 minutes to complete and produces highly detailed reports (up to 20 pages long) based on researching 20 to 30 sources.
- Evan recommended conducting deep research on three core areas:
    1. **Your Business:** Ask the AI to research your business, including your website and product portfolio, and perform a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats).
    2. **Your Industry:** Research the market (e.g., the ladies' boutique market in Ireland), identify current trends, future predictions (12–24 months), and analyse how competitors are using digital marketing.
    3. **AI's Impact:** Research how AI will impact your specific profession or business over the next 5, 10, and 15 years, and how to prepare for these changes.
- This feature is limited in the free version of ChatGPT (about 5 reports every two months) but is unlimited in Gemini.

AI Projects (Expert Consultants):

- Evan demonstrated creating an AI **Project** (or GEM in Gemini), a feature recently moved to the free version of ChatGPT.
- A project serves as an expert AI consultant tailored to a specific purpose (e.g., Digital Marketing for a Boutique).
- The key steps are:
    1. Create the project.
    2. Upload the detailed deep research reports (on the business and industry). Other files, such as internal analytics, can also be attached.
    3. Add custom instructions specific to the project (e.g., acting as an expert, suggesting innovative ideas, respecting budget constraints like €500/month or time constraints like 5 hours/week).
- When a question is asked within the project, the AI scans the attached files, custom instructions, and all previous chats to provide an accurate, expert, and highly informed answer.

IV. Post-Course Update (Google AI Search)

Evan alerted participants to a massive, recent change: the launch of **Google AI mode** in Ireland (having launched in the US and UK earlier).

- This AI mode (like Perplexity or ChatGPT search) summarizes the answer directly instead of just providing a list of links.
- Evan stressed that people will increasingly use AI mode for searches like "best family-friendly hotels in County Cork" or "recommend AI marketing trainers in Ireland".

- Businesses must check if they are being recommended. Users should ask the AI what criteria it uses for recommendations (e.g., applied AI, track record, credibility, reviews). Evan shared his own experience of optimizing his website to ensure the AI perceived him as an expert in AI training, leading to his inclusion in recommendation lists. Reputation, especially reviews and mentions on other websites (online PR), is now a major factor in AI search visibility.

Action Point List for Participants

Based on the topics covered in Week 5, participants should take the following actions:

I. Action Points for TikTok

- **Research:** Conduct an internal search on TikTok to see if businesses in your industry or niche are actively using the platform and what type of videos they are creating.
- **Account Setup:** If setting up a new account, avoid using a Facebook login. Use your mobile number when setting up the primary business account to leverage the benefit of contact suggestions.
- **Profile Optimization:** Go to your profile, tap Edit, and ensure your logo/photo, name, username, and bio are fully updated. Consider adding search terms to your name (up to 30 characters).
- **Privacy Check:** Confirm the account is set to **Public** if you intend to use it for marketing. Review the "Suggest your account to others" settings and toggle them on for marketing accounts to encourage connections with contacts and Facebook friends.
- **Niche Focus:** Decide on a clear, single niche topic and commit to producing content consistently on that topic to build authority with the AI algorithm.

II. Action Points for Video Editing

- **Download Edits:** Install the free Edits app (from Meta/Instagram) on your phone for all future video creation.
- **Editing Practice:** Practice using the video editor on family or fun footage first to learn the system.
- **Use AI Tools:** Utilize the "Cut Silences" tool to quickly clean up the beginning and end of talking-head videos.
- **Incorporate Visual Overlays:** For informative videos (especially for service providers), capture relevant B-roll (secondary footage) in **portrait** orientation and use the **Overlay** feature to increase visual interest and showcase products/services.
- **Captioning:** Generate automatic captions for all videos, and thoroughly proofread and edit the text to correct errors or conversational filler words before exporting.

III. Action Points for Advanced AI

- **Conduct Deep Research:** Immediately execute deep research reports (using Gemini, which is free and unlimited, or ChatGPT) on:
    1. Your specific business and conduct a SWOT analysis.
    2. Your industry, identifying trends and cutting-edge digital marketing techniques.
    3. The predicted impact of AI on your profession/business.

- **Create AI Project:** Set up a dedicated "Project" in ChatGPT (e.g., Digital Marketing for [Business Name]).
- **Build the Expert:** Upload the completed deep research reports (files) into the Project. Add specific custom instructions outlining the AI's role (e.g., act as an expert, adhere to specific budgets/time constraints).
- **Use the Expert:** Ask all strategic digital marketing questions within this dedicated project window.

IV. Action Points for Google AI Search

- **Check Recommendations:** Search Google using AI mode (where available) with queries relevant to your products or services (e.g., "recommend X in Y location") to see if your business is featured.
- **Determine Criteria:** Use an AI tool (like ChatGPT) to ask, "What criteria do you use when recommending [your service/product]?".
- **Optimize Reputation:** Based on the criteria identified, actively work to enhance your online reputation by gathering more reviews and seeking mentions/links on reputable external websites (online PR).
- **Update Content:** Ensure your website content clearly and explicitly addresses the criteria the AI prioritizes for recommendations.