



## Instagram Marketing - Part 1

This detailed summary captures the comprehensive Instagram marketing training delivered by Evan Mangan on behalf of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Kerry. The session was designed to transition participants from basic personal usage to sophisticated business marketing.

### 1. The Digital Marketing Landscape and Introduction

**Evan** established his background as a veteran in the digital marketing space, having led teams for global brands like Yahoo, BT, and Orange before founding The Marketing Crowd. He delivers training across 12 Local Enterprise Offices in Ireland on diverse topics, from AI to SEO. The core philosophy of this course is that while Instagram is a visual platform, marketing success is driven by understanding the **algorithms** and the technical **nitty-gritty** of the app's various interfaces.

### 2. The "Helicopter View": Understanding the Three Feeds

To use Instagram for business, **Evan** emphasised that one must understand that the app is not a single stream of content but a series of distinct feeds, each governed by different rules.

- **The Main Feed (Home):** This is where static **posts** (images) and **reels** (videos) from accounts a user follows are displayed. It also includes **sponsored ads**.
- **The Stories Feed:** Located at the top of the screen, this is a secondary, more casual feed where content disappears after **24 hours**. **Evan** noted that while stories are popular, they typically reach a smaller percentage of followers (around 7–9%) compared to reels.
- **The Reels Feed:** This is a purely video-based feed. Crucially, the Reels feed shows content from accounts you **do not follow**, making it the primary tool for reaching new audiences.

### 3. Algorithms: The "Computer Program" Behind the Scenes

**Evan** explained that the Instagram algorithm is essentially an **AI-driven computer program** with two primary objectives:

1. **To Detect User Interests:** It micro-analyses every search, watch time, and interaction to ensure users never find the app "dull".
2. **To Evaluate Content Quality:** The algorithm decides if a piece of content is "interesting" based on early engagement.

For a business, engagement is a hierarchy. While **likes** are easy, the algorithm places much higher value on **comments, saves, and shares**. If a reel gets "saves" and "shares" in its first few hours, the AI interprets this as high quality and "snowballs" it to a much wider audience of non-followers.

#### 4. Optimising the Business Profile for Search (SEO)

A significant portion of **Evan's** training focused on the **Profile**, specifically how to ensure a business is discoverable.

- **Username vs. Name:** These are the only two fields that Instagram's basic search engine uses to find accounts.
  - **Username:** This must be unique and is what people see at the top of every post or comment. Ideally, this should be the business name (e.g., @themarketingcrowd.ie).
  - **Name Field:** This is a **60-character field** that is often wasted by businesses repeating their username. **Evan** advised using this space for **keywords** describing the business and location. For example, a boutique in Killarney should have "Ladies Bridal Boutique Killarney Kerry Ireland" in their Name field so they appear when people search for those specific terms.
- **The Bio:** This is for **context and credibility**, not search ranking. It should tell potential followers who you are and what you do immediately upon landing on your profile.
- **The Grid:** Unlike Facebook, Instagram provides a "grid" view of all previous content. Users form an **instant visual impression** of an account within seconds of landing on the grid; if it looks messy or boring, they will not click "follow".

#### 5. Account Types: Why the "Creator" Account is Often Better

**Evan** detailed the three types of accounts: **Personal, Business, and Creator**.

- **Personal accounts** lack insights and scheduling.
- **Business and Creator accounts** both offer analytics (Insights), scheduling, and the ability to run ads.
- **The Music Difference:** This is the most common hurdle for businesses. Because of copyright deals with record labels, **Business accounts** are often restricted to a "stock music" library. **Creator accounts** (and personal accounts) have access to the full "Brilliant Music Library," including trending artists like Taylor Swift and Ed Sheeran. **Evan** recommended that most small businesses switch to a **Creator account** to access this music without losing any business tools or analytics.

## 6. Mastering Reels: The Engine of Growth

Reels were introduced as a direct copy of TikTok to prevent users from leaving the platform. Because Instagram wants Reels to succeed, the algorithm **favours** them, giving them much higher reach than static images.

- **The 3-Second Rule:** The first three seconds of a reel are vital; if you don't "hook" the viewer immediately, they will swipe away.
- **Average View Time:** The average view is only **9 seconds**. Therefore, reels should be **short, punchy, and between 15–30 seconds long**.
- **Scene Changes:** To keep a viewer's attention (which **Evan** likened to a "goldfish"), businesses should use **multiple short clips** (2-3 seconds each) rather than one long, static shot.

## 7. Practical Reel Production Techniques

**Evan** demonstrated three main types of reels for businesses:

1. **Clips Set to Music:** 5–7 short clips of products or locations transitioning quickly to an up-tempo beat.
2. **Voiceovers:** Showing clips while recording your voice over the top to explain a product's benefits.
3. **Talking to Camera:** Building trust by showing the "person behind the business". This is particularly important for service-based businesses like coaches or consultants.

### The Production Workflow:

- **Shooting:** Always shoot in **portrait mode** (phone held vertically). Shoot many small 10-second clips rather than one long video to make editing easier.
- **The Editor:** Use the **"Split"** tool to cut out "rubbish bits" and keep only the most visually interesting segments.
- **Audio Mixing:** When doing a voiceover, **Evan** showed how to **adjust the volume** of the background music (e.g., down to 25–30%) so it doesn't drown out the speech.
- **Covers:** Always select or design a **Cover image** (using tools like Canva) so the reel looks professional on the profile grid.

## 8. Search and Hashtags Strategy

**Evan** clarified that hashtags are essentially **search words**.

- **"For You" Search Results:** When someone searches for a topic (e.g., "ADHD tips" or "Bridal Ireland"), Instagram looks for those words in the **captions, hashtags, or even the audio** of the video.
- **The Hashtag Role:** While people don't click on hashtags as much as they used to, they remain the most efficient way to get your "keywords" into a caption to ensure the AI categorises your content correctly for search.

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## Action Point List for Participants

- [ ] **Audit Your Name Field:** Go to "Edit Profile" and ensure your **Name field** (not username) contains descriptive keywords (e.g., "Pottery Studio Kerry") instead of just repeating your business name.
- [ ] **Check Your Account Type:** Navigate to "Settings" -> "Business/Creator Tools and Controls" to see which account you are using.
- [ ] **Switch to Creator Account:** If you are on a Business account and find your music library limited, switch to a **Creator account** to access trending music.
- [ ] **Brainstorm Content with AI:** Use **ChatGPT** to generate 20 reel ideas specifically for your industry by asking it to "act like an Instagram marketing expert".
- [ ] **Film Your First Reel:** Record 5–6 short clips (3 seconds each) of your business or product in **portrait mode**.
- [ ] **Practise the "Split" Tool:** In the Instagram Reels editor, use the **Split and Delete** functions to trim your clips down to a punchy 15-second total.
- [ ] **Mix Your Audio:** If recording a voiceover, adjust the music volume slider to approximately **25–30%** so your voice remains clear.
- [ ] **Keyword-Heavy Captions:** When posting, write a caption that naturally includes terms your customers might search for and add **relevant hashtags** as additional search anchors.
- [ ] **Custom Cover Images:** Before sharing your reel, use the **"Edit Cover"** feature to ensure the most attractive frame (or a Canva-designed image) is what appears on your profile grid.

*This was created with the help of one of our AI colleagues 😊*