



Local Enterprise Office Kerry

Digital Marketing Programme

Week 5

Course Summary

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Prepared by The Marketing Crowd *with the help of one of our AI colleagues* 😊

Course Summary

Week 5: Instagram for Marketing

Week 5 moved from Facebook (last week) to Instagram. A poll at the start showed that most of the group were unsure how to use Instagram for marketing. 58% used it a little but weren't sure of the best approach and 33% didn't use it for marketing at all. A few people said they found the difference between stories, Reels and posts confusing, so the goal for the session was to make the app clear enough that you know what you're looking at every time you open it.

The session covered, in order:

- a quick overview of how Instagram fits together
- setting up your profile
- Reels (the three types, then a demo of how to make one)
- search
- the feed and how to engage with content
- single image posts and carousels
- stories

Evan pointed out that the LEOs run a two-part (6 hour) Instagram course and a separate 3 hour course on Reels alone. Some topics could only be touched on in this 3-hour session.

1. The big picture: how Instagram fits together

Home is your main feed. When you open Instagram, you always land on Home, just like Facebook and LinkedIn. It shows content from accounts you've chosen to follow, with ads mixed in. Two main things come into the feed:

- **Posts:** images
- **Reels:** videos

Profiles. Every account has a profile, and a business profile looks exactly like a personal one. It has:

- a circular profile image (a business would use its logo)
- a name and a username
- a short description (the bio)
- a grid of the account's recent posts and Reels

Evan used Brown Thomas as the example.

The visual hurdle. On Facebook, people scroll down your page and gradually work out what you post. On Instagram, someone sees your grid all at once and decides in a split second whether you're worth their time. Look at your grid through the eyes of a stranger. It doesn't need to look amazing, but it can't look messy or boring. If people get past that first impression, they may tap into your content and then tap Follow. Apart from friends and family, nobody will follow an account whose content is dull. Brown Thomas had around 227,000 followers as an example of what interesting content attracts.

The stories feed. The circles at the top of Home make up the stories feed. Each circle means an account you follow has posted to its story. You'll never see stories from accounts you don't follow.

- "Story" is just a name. Nobody is telling a story with a beginning, middle and end. It's simply a feed where you post images and videos.

- Anything posted to a story disappears after 24 hours and never appears on your grid. That's why people are more relaxed about what they post there.
- **Navigating stories:**
 - Tap any circle to start there. You don't have to start at the first one.
 - Tap the right of the screen to go forward and the left to go back.
 - Swipe left to move on to the next account's story.
 - The small segments at the top show how many items that account has posted.

The stories feed is a secondary feed. It's smaller and less prominent, and it reaches fewer people than the main feed. The algorithm only shows your posts and Reels to a percentage of your followers. So for anything important, it's worth also posting to your story as an extra chance to reach them.

The Reels feed (the play button). This is a third feed. It's full of Reels from accounts you *don't* follow, chosen by the algorithm because it thinks you'll find them interesting.

How the algorithm works. Just like on Facebook, the AI has two big jobs: work out what each of us finds interesting, and keep us on the app longer so we see more ads. It watches what we like, comment on, repost, share and save, and what we swipe past. Evan's own Reels feed showed dogs, golf, football and AI content. Someone interested in fashion would see something completely different.

Why Reels matter for marketing:

- When a business sends something out, posting to the main feed reaches more people than posting to stories.
- A Reel reaches more people than an image post, because Instagram knows we engage more with Reels.
- The algorithm first shows new content to a small group (perhaps a couple of hundred followers) and watches how they react. If they react well (watching much of the video, liking, commenting, sharing), it shows the content to more people.
- If it keeps doing well, a Reel can be pushed into the Reels feeds of non-followers who are interested in that topic. A life coach's Reel, for example, could reach people interested in personal development.
- This is why the Brown Thomas and The Marketing Crowd grids are mostly Reels, with occasional image posts.

Other icons:

- **Paper plane:** private messages.
- **Search:** typing "Killarney" shows posts and Reels with that word in the caption or spoken in the Reel. Typing "Killarney restaurant" narrows it down. The Accounts tab shows accounts with those words in their name or username.
- **Circle at the bottom right:** always takes you to your own profile.

Multiple accounts. You can have as many Instagram accounts as you like (personal, business, a second business, a hobby).

- To switch accounts, press firmly on the profile circle at the bottom right. A light tap won't work. Your other logged in accounts will pop up, along with an option to add another account.
- Each account has its own main feed, stories feed, likes, comments and profile, based on what that account follows.
- Evan showed this by switching between The Marketing Crowd and a restaurant account.

What to send out. The content you post is basically the same as on Facebook: interesting content that also lets you sell your products and services. In order of priority:

1. Reels first
2. then posts
3. stories as a secondary feed. It's not unimportant, just another way to reach your followers.

A restaurant announcing Christmas bookings, for example, might send out an image post and also post it to its story.

Trial Reels (answered when a question came up). Before you share a Reel, you can switch on Trial Reel. For 24 hours, the Reel goes only to non-followers, and you can then check the metrics.

- Some people use this to test whether a Reel is interesting before sending it to their followers. Evan isn't convinced this is very useful, because people who have never heard of you will naturally react less well than your followers.
- Where it *is* useful: it guarantees you reach non-followers interested in your topic, which otherwise only happens if your followers react well first.
- Some people send old Reels out as trial Reels purely to get them in front of new people.

2. Setting up your profile correctly

Creating an account.

- **For an extra account:** press firmly on the profile circle, tap Add Instagram account, then choose Create new account (or Log into existing account).
- **For your first account:** install the Instagram app from the App Store or Play Store and you'll be asked the same question.
- Either way, you'll be asked to enter a username and choose a password. That's it.

Usernames:

- They're all lowercase with no spaces.
- They're unique across about 3 billion users, so the one you want is often taken.

Editing your profile. Tap the profile circle, then Edit Profile.

Profile picture: use your logo. There are three reasons:

- It appears small beside everything you post, which helps a little.
- More importantly, logos stand out in the stories feed among photos of people. Evan used LEO accounts as examples.
- Most importantly, it's the first thing people see on your profile and it brands your account.

If you don't have a logo, use a product photo or a photo of yourself.

Username matters more than name. Your username appears almost everywhere:

- on posts in the feed
- at the start of captions
- on comments
- under your circle in the stories feed

Very few people ever see the name field. Your username should be the name of your business.

- You can change your username once every 14 days. You won't lose followers, posts or insights.

- Evan was clear that he isn't telling anyone to change their username. Change it only if you're unhappy with it.
- If the clean version is taken, people often add dots or underscores. Evan isn't keen on these for his own account, as they can look like a second choice.
- Because usernames accept dots, you can use your web address if it ends in .ie, .net or [.co.uk](https://www.co.uk). This also tells people where to find out more. It doesn't work with .com addresses.

The name field helps you get found in search. People use Instagram to follow their interests (handbags, pilates, mindfulness, travel, life coaching), so they often search for accounts related to those interests.

- Instagram account search is very basic. You only come up if the search words are in your name or username. What you put in the bio doesn't count.
- There's no filter for Ireland, so people type "Ireland" or a county into the search.
- **Examples shown:**
 - "Boutique Limerick" returned Ivory Lane, whose username is ivorylane.boutique and whose name is "Ivory Lane Boutique Galway & Limerick".
 - "Bridal Ireland" returned accounts with "bridal" and "Ireland" in the name or username.
- **Worked example:** for a Killarney boutique called Evans Boutique, make the username evansboutique (or evansboutique.ie if that's taken). Don't repeat the business name in the name field. Use its 60 characters for search words such as "Ladies Fashion Bridal Boutique Kerry Ireland". Drop "Boutique" if you run out of space, since it's already in the username.
- Ask yourself what words people would use to search for your type of business. If those words aren't in your name or username, you won't come up.

The bio gives context. The bio isn't for search words. It tells a newcomer what you're about so the grid makes sense to them. A bridal shop bio, for example, read: "Award winning bridal shop. 20 years of helping brides say yes to the dress."

Aim for context first, then credibility, then a little selling if there's room. Evan's own bio covers:

- the 20,000+ Irish businesses trained
- the 12 LEOs he works with
- the AI marketing academy, with a link

Links. Unlike Facebook, links in Instagram captions don't work. This is deliberate, to keep Instagram from becoming spammy. People will tap a link in a caption and get frustrated when nothing happens.

Instead, you add up to 5 links under Edit Profile, then Links. To add one:

1. If you already have 5 links, tap one and choose Remove link.
2. Open the page you want in your browser, press and hold the URL and choose Copy link.
3. Go back to Instagram, tap Add link, paste the URL, give it a title and tap the tick.
4. To move it to the top, tap the three dots, choose Reorder and drag it up. Only the first link shows on your profile. Tapping it reveals all five.

In your caption, say "tap the link in our profile".

Linktree. Years ago, Instagram allowed only one link, so tools like Linktree appeared. Linktree gives you a small page holding many links, and you put a link to that page in your profile. Now that Instagram allows 5 links, Linktree is redundant for most people because it adds an extra step. Only use it if 5 links aren't enough.

The three account types. Instagram has personal accounts, business accounts and creator accounts (for politicians, artists, musicians, influencers and content creators). Every new account starts as personal.

Switching is free and easy, and it's worth doing because you get:

- much better insights, such as reach, how long people watched a video and what percentage reached the end
- the ability to turn content into ads
- the ability to schedule content

Business vs creator: the music difference. Instagram pays record labels so users can add popular music to Reels. The labels allowed this for personal and creator accounts but not for business accounts. Business accounts only get a library of about 10,000 stock music tracks. Evan gave the example of Ed Sheeran reportedly being paid £1 million by Marks & Spencer for Shape of You. A creator account gives you everything a business account does (insights, scheduling, ads, Meta Business Suite) plus the popular music. Millions of businesses have switched to creator. Instagram doesn't check whether you're "really" a creator. You lose nothing when you switch.

How to switch from personal:

1. Go to your profile and tap Edit Profile.
2. Scroll down and tap Switch to professional account. "Professional" is Instagram's umbrella term for business or creator.
3. Choose a category, for example restaurant or florist.
4. Choose Business or Creator.

How to switch from business to creator:

1. Go to your profile and tap the menu at the top right.
2. Tap Account type and tools, then Account type.
3. Tap Switch account type.

Instagram only offers the two account types you're *not* currently on. If it offers business and personal, you're already a creator account.

3. Reels

Saving and collections. Before the examples, Evan showed the Save button under any post or Reel.

- You can save into collections, which work like folders. You can create a new collection as you save.
- To find saved items, go to your profile, tap the menu, then Saved, then Collections.
- Saving is private. The account sees how many times its content was saved but never who saved it, so you can save competitors' content freely.

Video marketing principles:

- **Keep it short.** The average video view is 9 seconds, so think around 20 seconds. The AI measures how much of a video people watch and whether they rewatch it, and both are more likely with short videos.
- **The first 3 seconds (the hook).** Videos arrive in a feed rather than being chosen, and people decide within about 3 seconds whether to keep watching. Open with your most interesting clip, or add text that sparks curiosity. Never build up slowly to the good part.

- **Keep them watching through variety.** A one minute shot of a sunset is dull. Five or six short clips from different angles (garden, kitchen, upstairs window) hold attention. A musician should cut a track down to its best 20 or 30 seconds.

Type 1: lots of short clips set to music. Examples shown:

- **A shoe shop:** about 12 seconds made up of 7 clips alternating between looking down at the shoes and the mirror, with a little text.
- **A boutique:** under 10 seconds of quick shots of a jacket, belt and bag.
- **Sunset Reels from tourism accounts,** including an Irish one.
- **A hair salon:** short clips from each stage of the process.
- **A Kerry garden maintenance business:** clips of the work, including driving over the phone in the opening seconds to grab attention.

Other ideas include a florist showing roses arriving and bouquets being made, or clips from an event. You put the clips into the editor, keep the best second or two from each and add music.

Type 2: voiceover. This is Type 1 with your voice added using the microphone button in the editor (music is optional). It's useful when clips and music alone don't get your message across. Examples shown:

- a Killarney gym explaining an upcoming programme
- a beauty coach applying cream while talking through the ingredients
- a business coach
- an artist sharing her thoughts while showing her studio
- a fashion account promoting a Dublin pop up shop

Type 3: talking to the camera. Evan revisited the spectrum from an earlier week:

- **Visually interesting products** (boutiques, shoes, jewellery, tattoos, art, photography). These businesses have plenty to film and can sell openly, because people enjoy that content.
- **Services.** These businesses have less to film, can't sell all the time, and their quality isn't obvious from a picture. They need to share tips, advice and helpful content.

How each Reel type fits the spectrum:

- **Type 1** suits product businesses best. Service businesses have less material (maybe events or an office makeover).
- **Type 2** suits both ends. Service businesses can use it to share tips.
- **Type 3** is optional but beneficial for product businesses, because people engage more with videos where they can see the person behind the business. For service businesses it's close to essential, because *you* are what people are buying. Share your expertise so viewers think "I'd want to book her."

Examples shown included a boutique owner talking through autumn knitwear, a life coach, a psychologist and one of Evan's own Reels about ChatGPT.

Evan's suggested progression: start with Type 1, then learn voiceovers, then talk to the camera if you're up for it.

Making a Type 1 Reel (demo).

1. **Decide what the Reel is about.** For ideas, ask ChatGPT something like: "I have this kind of business. Act like an Instagram marketing expert and brainstorm 20 ideas for Reels." Then ask it which Reel type suits your chosen idea and how to make it step by step. Evan's demo used a shoe shop promoting a 20% sale.

2. **Shoot your clips.** Always shoot in portrait (vertical). Landscape video appears as a small letterbox with black bars. Keep each clip short (around 10 seconds) so editing is easier, and aim for 7 or 8 clips for variety.
3. **Switch to the right account** in Instagram and check it's a creator account if you want popular music. If the switch options are business and personal, you're on creator.
4. **Select your clips.** Tap the plus button and choose Reel. Tap the select icon (two overlapping squares) to choose several clips, and they'll be numbered in order. Images can be included too, but Reels made from video look much better. For great videos made from photos, Evan recommended CapCut and its Templates section: choose a template, tap Add media and pull in photos from your phone.
5. **Tap Skip on the AI edit.** After tapping Next, Instagram's AI puts the clips together and picks music. Evan's advice is to skip this, as you probably won't like the result.
6. **Find your way around.** The main editing area is where you add audio, text, voice (microphone), captions and stickers. Captions generate automatically from whatever is spoken. Swipe up to open the editor, and tap the big screen to return to the main editing area.

Using the editor. This works the same way in any video editor, including CapCut, InShot and iMovie.

- The playback screen sits at the top with a play/pause button. The clips appear along the bottom.
- The white line (the play line) marks your exact position. Press play to move it at normal speed, or drag your finger across the clips to move quickly forward or back.
- **To trim a clip:**
 1. Move the white line to where the good part starts.
 2. Tap the clip (it turns yellow and a new menu appears with options such as delete, reorder, volume and speed).
 3. Choose Split.
 4. Tap the section before the line and Delete it.
 5. Move to where the good part ends, Split again and delete the section after.
- Use the timer to judge length. In the demo, three clips totalling around 29 seconds were cut to 3 seconds each, making 9 seconds. There's no magic number, so use common sense and keep it punchy.
- If you make a mistake, tap Undo.

Adding music.

1. In the main editing area, tap Audio and search, for example Ed Sheeran's Shape of You.
2. Preview the different versions and choose one.
3. Slide the track left or right until the best part sits inside the rectangle. That's the part that will play.
4. Tap Done.

For a voiceover, tap Voice, record yourself, then optionally tap Captions.

Final screen before sharing:

- **Edit cover:** a single image represents each Reel on your grid and sets the tone for it. Drag along the Reel to choose a frame, or tap Add from camera roll to use a portrait image designed in Canva, perhaps with text.
- **Caption:** add context, for example "Our biggest sale of the year is now on, 20% off all leading brands... ends this Saturday." Never say "tap this link". Say "tap the link in our profile", or give a simple website address.

- **Hashtags:** these used to be the main way to be found, by tapping a hashtag. Now Instagram search looks for words anywhere in your caption, so hashtags work as search words. "#Nikelreland" and "#ReebokTrainers" help you appear for searches like "Reebok trainers" or "Nike sale". The limit was reduced from 30 to 5.
- **Location:** this tags the Reel as relating to a place, such as Killarney or even Brown Thomas. It gives a small boost when people search for content about that place. It does **not** limit who sees the Reel. Your Reel goes to whichever followers the algorithm chooses, wherever they live. This came up as a question and Evan was clear the answer is 100% no.
- **Also share to Facebook:** this appears if your Instagram is linked to your Facebook Page. To link them, go to your Facebook Page, then Settings, then Linked Accounts.
- **More options, then Schedule:** the scheduling option is a little hidden here. You can pick a date and time.

After posting:

- **Pin to your grid.** You can pin up to 3 posts or Reels to the top row. Tap the post, tap the menu and choose Pin to your main grid. Use this for your most popular content or a short welcome Reel, for example "Hi, Evan here from Evan's Boutique, here we post our latest stock and special offers..."
- **Your profile is not a website.** People land on it once, judge it, browse and follow, then rarely come back because your content now comes to them. You usually get one chance to turn a visitor into a follower, so treat your profile as the place that tempts people to follow you.
- **Changing a cover later:** tap the Reel, tap the menu, then Edit. You can change the caption and the cover but not the video itself. Many people don't realise they can do this, and it's a good way to make the grid more appealing.

4. Search

Discover. When you tap Search, before typing anything you'll see Discover. These are posts and Reels the algorithm thinks you'll like. Your content can appear in other people's Discover areas if the AI rates it as interesting. You can't control this beyond making good content.

For You results. Type something in, for example "Killarney restaurant". The default For You tab shows posts and Reels with those words in the caption, in hashtags or spoken in the video. This is a great research tool. Evan gave two examples:

- A counsellor on a previous course searched for "ADHD tips" and instantly saw what others in her field were posting.
- An artist searched for "portrait artist Ireland".

You'll quickly see which of the three Reel types others in your field use.

Accounts tab. Every result has the search word in its name or username. Many Killarney businesses without "Killarney" in either won't realise they don't appear.

Audio tab. Shows tracks used in Reels, such as "The Road to Killarney" or "Dancing Queen", and all the Reels that use them. This is interesting but not useful for marketing.

Tags tab. Shows hashtags containing your word. Tapping #KillarneyNationalPark shows all content with that exact hashtag.

In summary:

- To get your **account** found, put search words in your name field and leave your username alone.

- To get your **posts and Reels** found, put search words in your hashtags or caption text.

5. The feed and engaging with content

The main feed shows posts and Reels from accounts you follow, plus ads. The AI decides what appears based on what it knows you like and how the first people who saw each piece reacted. There's no guarantee that everything Brown Thomas posts will reach you.

Likes and comments work just like Facebook.

Share (paper plane). For about the first 15 years, Instagram wouldn't let you share content into your followers' feeds, because it wanted the main feed to be 100% original. The paper plane offers two options:

- **Share privately:** choose any account and add a private message. The recipient sees it in their messages and can tap through to the post.
- **Add to story:** the post appears on a background in your story. **Tip:** by default, it can look like you posted the image yourself. Tap the image before posting so it switches to a view that makes clear you're sharing another account's post, with their caption visible. Evan recommends doing this every time.

Repost (circular arrows). Instagram added this within the last year or so. It forwards a post or Reel into your followers' feeds, but it doesn't say "shared by" the way Facebook does. It appears as the original account's content, with your profile picture and a short message alongside. Always add context, such as "Fab recipe", "Worth reading" or "Loved it".

From a marketing point of view, if your followers repost your content, it reaches their followers with your branding on it. That may bring you new followers.

When would a business repost? When you think your followers would find something interesting. For example:

- a local festival launch
- another business winning an award
- a useful Reel from someone else in your field, which positions you as an account that shares great content

You don't have to repost. Instagram was built for people, and businesses simply choose whether to use features like this.

Save is private and anonymous, as covered above.

6. Posts: single images and carousels

Single image post (demo using a restaurant account):

1. Tap the plus button, choose Post, then pick the image.
2. Use a **4x5 portrait** image. In Canva, choose Social media, then Instagram 4x5. Landscape works but looks less impactful in the feed.
3. **Optional extras:**
 - **Music:** creator accounts get popular tracks. Don't add music to everything, just occasionally where it adds something, such as at Christmas or Halloween.
 - **Text, overlays and filters:** these are aimed at people who don't use Canva. If you use Canva, do your design work there instead.

4. **Caption and the rest:** write the caption, for example "Look what our chef John just added to the menu... to see our new menu, tap the link in our profile." Then add hashtags (such as Killarney, Kerry, restaurants, eating out), an optional location, sharing to Facebook and optional scheduling.
5. You can pin the post to the top of your grid afterwards, just like a Reel.

Carousels. On a profile grid:

- a play icon means a Reel
- two overlapping squares mean a carousel

A carousel is a post people swipe through. It can include images, videos or both, with up to 20 items. Brown Thomas mixes images and videos.

Why carousels reach more people. Carousels tend to reach more followers than single images because swiping counts as engagement. The AI sees people engaging and shows the post to more people.

When this came up as a question, Evan explained it's the same principle every time: Reels reach more people because we engage with them more, and carousels beat single images for the same reason. If nobody swiped a carousel, it would hardly reach anyone.

To create a carousel:

1. Tap the plus button and choose Post. There's no separate carousel option.
2. Tap the select icon (two overlapping squares) and choose several items. They're numbered in order.
3. Choose your first item carefully, because it's the one everyone sees.
4. Carry on as normal: Next, skip the extras if you wish, add a caption and hashtags, then Share.

Dots under the post and a counter (for example "1 of 5") show people it's a carousel.

7. Stories

Posting a story:

1. Tap the plus button and choose Story.
2. Pick an image or video from your phone, or open the camera and take a photo, for example a dessert on a white tablecloth.
3. Tap Your Story.

There's no requirement on how much to post. Two or three items is a good amount, as people won't look at ten. You don't have to post stories at all, but you miss out if you don't.

Extras:

- **Text:** type, change the font and colour, and pinch to resize and rotate.
- **Music:** choose a track and the section to use, just like in a Reel.
- **Stickers:** there are many.

The link sticker. This is the key sticker, because stories are the only place on Instagram where you can add a clickable link. Posts and Reels can't have one.

1. Copy the page URL in your browser.
2. Go back to your story, tap Sticker, then Link.
3. Paste the URL.
4. Tap Customise sticker text and write something tempting, such as "View yummy menu".

5. Position the sticker and post.

Sharing your own post to your story. For something important, such as "We're now taking bookings for Christmas", the post only reaches some of your followers, so share it to your story too:

1. Tap the paper plane under the post and choose Add to Story.
2. Tap the image so it's clear you're sharing the post itself.
3. Add a "Tap for details" sticker in the middle (search stickers for "tap"). Tapping the middle of a shared post already brings up a View Post link, but most people don't know that. The sticker prompts them, so they can get back to the full post and read the caption.

Viewing your own story:

- After posting, a rainbow ring appears around your profile circle. Tap it to see your story.
- An image shows for 5 seconds. Hold your finger on the screen to pause.
- Tap the right of the screen to go forward and the left to go back.
- Tapping the link sticker brings up the link to your web page. Tapping the Tap for details sticker brings up View Post.

8. Recap

- Set up your account and switch to business or creator (creator if you want popular music).
- Post content that's interesting but also lets you sell (covered in Week 4).
- Make more Reels than anything else. When you post, prefer carousels over single images.
- Share important posts and Reels to your story, and post extra content there too.
- Work on getting found in search: search words in your name field for your account, and in hashtags or captions for your content.
- Look at your profile through a stranger's eyes and use covers to improve your grid.

9. Giving someone else access to your Instagram (after the session)

A question after the session asked how to let someone manage your Instagram and Facebook without losing control.

Sharing your password is fine for a trusted colleague, but Evan wouldn't do it with an outside contractor. It's also awkward with two factor authentication, because you'd have to pass on the login code every time they log in.

The better way is Meta Business Suite:

1. On your Facebook Page, go to Settings, then Linked Accounts, and make sure your Instagram account is connected.
2. Open Meta Business Suite from your Page, then go to Settings, then People, then Invite people.
3. Enter the person's email address and choose what to give them access to. The Instagram account will appear because it's linked.
4. If you want, give temporary access with an expiry date. You can remove access later.

Next week (Week 6, final week)

- TikTok, before the coffee break. It works differently, and the other platforms are copying it.
- About an hour of extra video editing after the break, including how to make a talking to camera video.
- Pulling everything from the programme together and prioritising.

This was created with the help of one of our AI colleagues ☺