

MARKETING

Book excerpt: The End of Marketing

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Carlos Gil is the author of "The End of Marketing"

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By [Carlos Gil](#)

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Traditional marketing is dead. In an era where a YouTube star gets more daily impressions than Nike, Coca-Cola and Walmart combined, social networks are the new norm.

But no matter how easy it is to reach potential customers, the relationship between brand and consumer needs the human touch.

"The End of Marketing" (Kogan Page, 2020) by Carlos Gil, founder/CEO of Gil Media Co., a full-service digital marketing firm and consultancy, offers content ideas across different social platforms, interviews with leading content creators and examples from leading brands.

Here is an excerpt from the book:

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Moving on from tools, below are the most frequently asked questions that I hear whenever I speak at a conference or present virtually via webinar, some of which you might be asking yourself while reading this book.

Do I have to be on every social network?

Answer: No.

Here's why: as tempting as it is to increase your visibility by jumping on every social network, it's a lot of work to take on. Instead of creating accounts just for the sake of having a profile, be purposeful with the social networks you choose. That means instead of joining a newer social network like Vero or TikTok for the purpose of being early, tap into existing communities on Instagram and YouTube instead. While you can't be everywhere and be effective, you should aim to be on the social networks where your customers are, where you can get the most significant reach. An easy way to figure out which social networks to be on is by simply asking where your audience's attention is. If they're not on Pinterest, there's no need to spend a bunch of time and energy there.

Another good test for which networks to choose is by asking yourself what value you can bring to the network. If you

can't create content that people on the network want to see, put your efforts elsewhere. If you have the time and resources to make outstanding videos, then you should have a presence on YouTube so you can share those videos across the networks your audience love most. If you don't have the bandwidth for video production, get off YouTube and don't feel guilty about not being there.

Which is better for my business: Snapchat or Instagram?

Answer: Instagram.

Here's why: Snapchat and Instagram are both popular among a wide range of audiences, including Millennials and Generation Z. Initially, the primary differentiator was that on Snapchat, unlike Instagram, the photos and videos you send are only visible for a few seconds before they disappear forever. Then Instagram came out with its version of snaps' through Instagram Stories. While both can be advantageous for your marketing strategy, they also require a significant commitment of time since the visual content is shared as disappearing, short stories. Because they disappear, it's more work to have to constantly create content to stay relevant. However, just because you can advertise on a platform doesn't mean that you should. Especially if your marketing department is small or you have limited capacity.

Critical differences between Snapchat and Instagram should be considered before allocating your marketing dollars. One of the key benefits to using Instagram is that your content doesn't disappear, so it can be found organically by users who type in the hashtags you're using. Plus, you can link to your website on your profile. Snapchat is another story. While there is a Discover function, it is not nearly as user friendly as Instagram's Search & Explore and due to the temporary nature of Snapchat stories, the depth and breadth of content aren't there. So based on this, Instagram is the clear winner.

Do my usernames have to be consistent?

Answer: Yes.

Here's why: not only will it be easier for you to promote your social media handles if they're consistent, but it will also be easier for fans to find and tag you. When usernames are different across every network, it can get confusing. If you tweet an Instagram image, but you have two different usernames, it complicates things. Inevitably, someone will tag your Twitter name on Instagram or your Instagram name on Twitter, and you'll miss opportunities for engagement.

Today it's not only domain names that matter; usernames are just as, if not more, valuable in terms of digital real estate considering that your username appears in the URL of your profile address. What's more important is that your usernames are consistent across each network. One of my biggest regrets is not securing @CarlosGil everywhere. Instead, I'm @CarlosGil83 on Twitter and Instagram but have varying URLs on LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube.

What type of content should I share?

Answer: The type of content your audience wants to see. Here's why: it all comes down to knowing your ideal customer. If you have a solid understanding of their lifestyle, desires and pain points, it will become much easier to create or find relevant content they're likely to enjoy and share. Beyond that, follow influencers in your industry who produce excellent content and share their stuff.

You can also search relevant hashtags or check out what's trending on Twitter and Instagram to understand what people are talking about right now, then join in on those conversations. Idea generation is the hardest part, so let your audience do it for you. Talk to your followers or ideal customers and ask them what they would like to see. You can also ask your employees to contribute one blog post per month. When you divvy up the work, it becomes less stressful and more thoughtful.

How do I get more followers?

Answer: You don't need more followers. You need more buyers.

Here's why: regardless of which network you're talking about, it's the quality, not the number of followers that matters. You need followers who will engage with your content, not just add to your follower count. Therefore, don't worry about how many followers you have it's only a vanity metric.

Instead, be more concerned about growing buyers and loyal brand advocates. Since people are bombarded with content from all over the place, you have to give them a compelling enough reason to follow you. You're not just

asking people to follow you. You're asking for their attention, which is a limited resource. Why should they give their attention to you instead of someone else?

How do I get organic reach on Facebook?

Answer: Keep Facebook users on Facebook.

Here's why: Facebook has openly said that its algorithm favours content posted from personal profiles and not brand or company pages. Today less than 1 per cent of your page followers actively see content posted by your company in their newsfeed, arguably making Facebook a pay to play' platform for brands. Here's what you can do to reclaim organic reach on Facebook without paying to reach your fans:

Organic Reach on Facebook Checklist:

- Post content directly to Facebook known as native posting versus using a third-party scheduling tool.
- Keep traffic contained on Facebook instead of attempting to send users to your website or YouTube. If you are posting website links in your content, there's a high likelihood that the algorithm will deprioritize your content.
- Use Facebook Live to host a weekly show from your company account or tap into Facebook Live for product demos. By using Facebook Live, Facebook will send a notification to your followers as soon as you go live.
- As an alternative to posting links that point users to your company blog, try using Facebook Notes.
- Create a group for your most engaged fans or one that's relevant to your industry.

How can I hack the Facebook algorithm?

Answer: Engage on old posts.

Here's why: if a Facebook user goes through an extended period without engaging with your business page content or they don't intentionally visit your page, it's likely they will never see your content again unless you pay to run an ad or a friend in their network engages with your business page content.

As best practice, you should respond to all comments and reviews left on your business page within 24 hours; however, it's possible that throughout the years you've ignored opportunities to engage your followers. By engaging within the comments section of any old Facebook post on your business page, you will trick' the Facebook algorithm into thinking your post is new and relevant. Facebook will also notify users who previously commented on your post content.

To re-engage missing fans from your Facebook business page, follow these steps:

1. Go to reviews left by customers on your business page and respond to all of them. By commenting on a review, even if it's outdated, the customer will be notified by Facebook, which is likely to trigger them to visit your page.
2. Leveraging Facebook Page Insights, identify your best-performing posts over the last year. Like' and reply to every user who commented on your posts. Doing this will trigger Facebook to notify those users and also resurface the post into the newsfeed as if it were new.
3. Last, run Facebook Ads targeting fans who have "liked" or engaged with your content within the last 12 months. To do this, you will need to create a custom audience.

I'm new to YouTube, where do I begin?

Answer: What are you able to teach?

Here's why: on the surface, one might look at YouTube as a place to watch music videos, stream video games online and tune in to one's favorite vlogger. However, as the second most-searched site online, YouTube is an untapped gold mine for businesses and creators.

Having an active presence on YouTube can help you gain precious website visits and drive leads as a result of the videos that you post. As an added benefit, your YouTube videos are also discoverable via Google search. Because Google owns YouTube, you have a higher likelihood of being discovered through a video related to your topic or subject matter expertise that you upload to YouTube than a traditional Google search, which crawls the entire Internet.

To grow your first 10,000 subscribers, follow this checklist:

Growing Your Subscribers Checklist:

- In 2014, while working a full-time job, I started my channel to vlog my life and gave up after not seeing a significant number of views. It wasn't until I began to record social media how-to, tutorial style, videos like the ones you see today that my purpose became clear. So, what's your purpose for being on YouTube?
- To get video views and subsequent subscriptions on your channel, you should research what else exists in the same genre or category. My process for creating videos on YouTube involves writing out the titles of topics that I am passionate about teaching and then researching both Google and YouTube to see what currently exists and what the top-ranking titles are.
- You will need to ensure that your videos have keywords as tags to improve discoverability. With TubeBuddy you can get recommendations on what tags to insert into your videos as well as see how your videos rank in search results for set tags.
- What are you able to teach that people are running a Google or YouTube search for (eg, How to do ')? There are two reasons why people go on YouTube: to be entertained or to be educated.
- The most common objections that I hear from business professionals who want to dive into YouTube to create but don't, are access to equipment, lack of expertise in editing and time. If you run a small business and need content, consider hiring a freelancer who can shoot and edit, and bring that person in every week.

Should I use hashtags?

Answer: Yes and no.

Here's why: although social media hashtags were initially exclusive to Twitter, today all content on Twitter is searchable based on keywords in tweets. Similarly, Facebook crawls keywords in posts. Therefore, hashtags are not required. However, on a social network like LinkedIn or Instagram, adding hashtags to your posts that are relevant to your content will increase the likelihood that a non-follower will see your content. To maximize your reach, you can try adding hashtags of trending topics to your content; however, be careful that you don't spam a feed with content that isn't relevant or applicable.

When writing a social media post for LinkedIn or a post caption on Instagram, be mindful of how your use of hashtags will appear to the eyes of an end user. You do not want hashtags to take away from your message, which is why I recommend that you post hashtags in the comments section of your Instagram post, and on LinkedIn only use one or two hashtags suggested by LinkedIn as needed.

Why should my employees become better storytellers?

Answer: The amount you earned from your social campaigns, minus the amount you invested.

Here's why: social media storytelling is a newer form of content marketing made popular by Snapchat and Instagram, as well as YouTube personalities. While consumers have grown tired of seeing content that appears to be an advertisement from a brand or corporation, storytelling is a tactic for individuals and corporations to be viewed as being 'real' and 'relatable' without relying on professionally produced content. With stories, think of your employees as the stars of your own reality series.

The key to telling good stories on social media is less about the platform and more about the story that you're trying to convey. Because stories typically expire within 24 hours of being posted, they should be short, attention-grabbing, and drive users to take a specific action. As best practice, you should storyboard your content whenever possible to have a beginning, middle and end.

Possible storytelling ideas for a corporation or business can revolve around the launch of a new product whereby storytelling is used to record a product demo; employees often do 'day in the life' takeovers on their company Snapchat or Instagram accounts; and stories can also be used by influencers who are compensated for taking over your brand account.

Is Facebook dying?

Answer: No.

Here's why: Facebook is still the leading social network among consumers with over 2 billion active users, followed

by Instagram with 1 billion. In the last several years, Facebook which owns Instagram has made many feature updates and enhancements to its Stories, Live Video and Facebook Watch toolset to empower its users to improve the quality of native storytelling within the platforms. And, to compete with YouTube as a go-to destination for consuming video content. Facebook is one of the most influential companies in the world. It's not going anywhere.

I'm in a "boring" industry, do I still need social media?

Answer: Yes.

Here's why: social media isn't just for athletes, celebrities, influencers and well-known brands. When it comes to marketing, your goal is to reach your target audience where they're paying the most attention. And for the past 10+ years, that has been social media. A whopping 78 per cent of Americans have at least one social media profile, so there's a strong chance your target customers are on at least one of the major networks.

Remember, social media isn't an advertising platform for you to shout your message as loudly as possible. Instead, use it as a platform to educate and entertain your audience. For instance, taxes are about as dull as it gets for most non-accounting people. But H&R Block puts together fun social media campaigns that don't make you cringe at the thought of tax season.

Does influencer marketing work?

Answer: Yes, but it has its flaws.

Here's why: influencer marketing is already a billion-dollar industry and will continue to grow as an alternative to traditional print and TV media advertising, which is typically more expensive. However, the state of influencer marketing is significantly flawed. When you take several factors into account, such as influencers buying fake followers and buying engagement, one can view it as an ineffective method of marketing. Instead, companies should create their influencers.

An influencer doesn't need to be Internet famous to be influential. An influencer can be an existing customer who already speaks about you organically without compensation or it can even be an employee. Whoever you deem to be influential, engage them directly to endorse your company or services through written testimonials on their blog and social media accounts, or have them create a YouTube review in the form of a video.

How can I work with brands?

Answer: Engage them directly.

Here's why: if you want to work with brands and get sponsored you have to go to them directly and pitch to them on what your potential value is to them. My advice is never to lead in with your follower count, because as I've shared throughout the book, renting an audience is a temporary solution to a bigger problem. Instead what you need to do is sell them on the content that you would like to propose creating for them. Brands don't need your followers; they need your content.

The two easiest platforms to pitch brands directly on are Instagram and Twitter, by sending a direct message (DM). Within the DM, mention that you'd like to collaborate' with the brand and want to know if they partner' with influencers and creators. By using words such as collaborate' and partner' you are making your pitch more personal and inviting. Also, begin by engaging brands that you already purchase products from.

What's the biggest "secret" that no one else is telling me?

Answer: You're only as good as your last post.

Here's why: it's the same on any social network: you are only as good as your last tweet or post. A social media post has a relatively short lifespan and is only relevant as long as it has engagement. Engagement on posts is a form of oxygen; therefore, you should always aim to post content that delivers value through education or entertainment to your intended audience.

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