

Successful Social Media Marketing Strategies That Supercharge Engagement
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TRANSCRIPT

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Nathan: Good day and welcome to Harland Clarke's The Informed Banker Webcast: Successful Social Media Marketing and Strategies that Supercharge Engagement. This webcast is being recorded and a replay will be provided to you within a few days. If you have any questions please do use the question box located in the control panel. Your questions are private and are only seen by our presenters. I will now turn the call over to Christine Ahlgren of Harland Clarke. Christine, you have the call.

Christine: Thanks, Nathan. Good afternoon and welcome to everyone who's joined us today for this month's installment of The Informed Banker. This series is designed to cut through the noise and bringing you succinct, timely information on topics that are critical to community financial institutions. Today's session, Successful Social Media presented by Alexandra Gekas of Callahan & Associates. We'll discover new ways for marketers and banking and other industries that are leveraging social media for both engagement and growth.

Alexandra is Vice President of Marketing and Engagement at Callahan where she leads a team of marketers and communications specialists. She's passionate about improving credit union performance and using that data to solve problems. Alex, we're thrilled to have you with us today. The floor is all yours.

Alexandra: Thank you so much for Christine and good afternoon to everyone. Good morning to my West Coast folks on the line. I'm really excited to be here today talking about my absolute favorite topic in marketing, social media. Before we get into the fun stuff, Nathan, if you can go to my first slide, I want to go ahead and set the stage a little bit for everyone. I don't know where you all are from. I'm online I personally live in San Francisco, California and the Bay Area deals with a lot of traffic. I'm assuming everyone has been stuck in traffic at one point or another and I think traffic is a really good metaphor to explain social media today.

That feeling of sitting in bumper to bumper traffic when you're late for an event, that feeling of being a little late to the party, where other people are zooming by you may be in a lane and just when you make some progress you kind of get stuck again and you don't know how to invigorate and move forward. That feeling of being stuck in traffic happens to a lot of marketers so you're definitely not alone there. What I want you to do when you get stuck in that feeling of traffic next time is take a deep breath and remember that you have the HOV lane.

As you'll see here on the next slide, this lane is what's going to get you to your end goal just a little bit faster if you sit back and focus on some key ingredients that really accelerate social media engagement. There are three key HOV engagement strategies that I want to cover today. As you'll see here on the next slide, here is what they are; humanize, optimize and visualize. As you sit back and you have that feeling of maybe being a little bit overwhelmed, not knowing where to focus, these are the three key areas that I want you to focus on.

What I'm going to do today is I'm going to go through these three concepts from a high level because we only have a short amount of time here together. I'm going to focus on them from a high level and then I'm going to spend the rest of our time sharing examples of engaging posts I've seen throughout the year because I think the best way for us as marketers to be able to invigorate our strategy is to learn from others. That's how I'm gonna structure today. Let's go ahead and move on to the first slide.

Humanize. You can go ahead and go through the first three. There you go. Perfect. Humanize your voice. There's this quote that Forbes ran, "Infuse authenticity into your marketing." I really encourage you as marketers to try and infuse authenticity into each and every post that you have on social because people crave that authenticity today. Be authentic and be relatable. Don't try to aim to be perfect and be something that you're not. That's definitely a big no, no with social media. Don't try to make every image or video as crisp as you possibly can people can see through that. You want to focus on being authentic.

You also want to show behind the scenes and not just of your marketing team or your frontline staff, which I commonly see, you also want to showcase management. You want to show the people behind your brand and you want to show your audience that people can trust you with their money because you care about their wellbeing and their financial future. You want to show that behind the scenes and I have some great examples for you later on. Then get out into the community. That sounds obvious, but I don't see a lot of institutions doing it well. You want to get out there and you want to show how much the community means to you. We'll talk about that a little bit more.

On the next slide, you'll see the second strategy which is optimize your content. Marketer Lee Odden once said, "Content isn't king, it's the kingdom." That is so true. I think with marketing, there's a lot of buzzwords that we have to deal with. A lot of new terms that come in and out become popular then go away. Content is not one of them, that is here to stay and it's so important. It's actually critical with your social media strategy. You need to be making sure that you're developing a winning content strategy, but in order to do that, you have to research what resonates with your audience.

You need to be doing keyword searches on places like YouTube and Google to see what phrases are coming up. That's what people are searching for. That's what you should be using. You should be talking to your frontline staff, you should be asking them what types of questions they are getting from account holders, talking to your call center manager, what questions they're getting. You need to gather up and base your content on what your account holders need to know and what they're asking about.

Chase did a really good job of building a group of advocates, I have a Chase credit card, so because of that, I got pulled into their customer panel. They sent a simple email asking if I wanted to join this panel and now they have the opportunity because I self-selected in to ask questions like, "Rank your top five financial concerns in 2019," or "Where do you spend most of your time online?" It's a good opportunity by building those advocates to help spark ideas. You need to focus on learning about your audience first and foremost that you can effectively communicate with them.

Then also you want to outline your perfect content mix. One of the biggest challenges I find in social media is coming up with ideas of what to do next. I'm going to show you a little bit later about categories that you can use, that's how I like to think of my social media. Coming up with that mix is really beneficial. Lastly, you have to nail your headlines and your post techs. You need to have a killer and stellar headline. I think that that's pretty obvious, but it can be challenging when you're pushing out a lot of content.

When I'm trying to come up with a headline, I like to think of three things or three different types of headlines on how to such as how to save for your first home, a list such as five tips for buying your first home or a question, are you ready to buy your first home? By coming up with multiple headlines for one piece of content, that gives you the ability to then use it on different channels and also test what's resonating and what's resonating on each particular platform. I would definitely encourage you to do that. It's also great for repurposing, you've got to optimize your content.

Then next up is the visualize. It's probably not a surprise to you on the call that social media today is very image forward. When it comes to winning images there's a lot to keep in mind, but I like to focus on two key areas. Think big. It might sound obvious, but I found a lot of financial brands clearly publishing this same image size to every single platform and that can leave your images looking grainy and distorted. You want to be careful about that. There's this blog that Sprout Social publish and it's called, "Always up to date guide to social media image sizes."

I personally love that because it's a great thing to have bookmarked on your browser so that you can refer to that and make sure that you're appropriately sizing your images. It's really important. Also, think consistent, that's the second area. I'm sure you all have a brand palette of some sort at your institution, that should show through in your social

media. Someone should be able to look at your photos and see a common and consistent sort of imagery with similar filters and colors.

For inspiration I like WeWork and Mountain America Credit Union, they do a good job of honing in on this. They post engaging photos while staying true to their identity. Now, if someone clicks on that gallery and they see their images, they're going to think you're more professional if you show a more consistent look, so I think that's really important, but just keep in mind, you do have to make sure you're not too polished. Like I said at the on the original side, because you still want to have that human aspect, but consistency is definitely important.

You also need to be cognizant of the color contrast with all of your images. You don't want to have colors that are mixing, creating really bad visual vibrations that make your readers' eyes burn, quite frankly. Adobe Spark has a great infographic on that, on which colors don't mix. I definitely like to refer to that. Be careful with your filter use. I know it's really easy to just throw on Clarendon or ... in Instagram. It's easy to do, but you want to make sure that you're not over filtering and that you're actually representing your brand in the most accurate light possible.

All right, let's get into the fun stuff here on the next slide. This is my most favorite part. Over the past year, I spent a lot of time on social media just going through and following brands, they're doing a lot of engaging things on social media, I would encourage you to do the same. As I mentioned, most of my inspiration for our social media at Callahan and Associates comes from actually just following other brands and see what they're doing. I want to share some of those with you here today. Let's get started with number one.

I mentioned before, that I really like categorizing because, for me, it's the easiest way for me to get inspiration when I'm trying to think of something new to do. The first category that I'm going to talk about is nostalgic. These appeal to your readers, inner nostalgia. I really like SF Fire here on the left-hand side, they use Throwback Thursday to post old black and white photos that show their history. That's really relatable, I love that they did that with their posts. On another avenue of the nostalgia category, though is the middle which is Suncoast, which appeals to a different sort of nostalgia.

They're posting a picture that appeals to the Gen Y folks that grew up loving Doug Funnie on Nickelodeon. They were tying in Turbo Tax to this particular meme of Doug Funnie. I love that, it got a lot of really great engagement on Facebook in particular. Then Scott Credit Union, they brought in their mascot to show the 10-year challenge, which was taking a common social media viral campaign and really making it their own at the credit union, which I love. Different ways, I think of nostalgia but if you had

nostalgia as something in your back pocket, it is a great thing to be able to relate to your audience, engage those.

On the next slide, we'll get into aspirational. Aspirational photos are always a great way to inspire your followers. Peloton always does an amazing job of this. Here you can see their black and white single quote, it always gets me fired up for the day. How can we fire up our followers and really inspire them? You can see Sallie Mae on the left-hand side they use a quote from Walt Disney and an image that represents graduation to inspire their followers that have dreamed of getting a college degree.

Now, I'm showing a fitness quote so that's not really going to resonate with credit unions or banks, but I will say that there are a lot more financial quotes than people might consider. For example, I'm reading a book right now called *The Financial Diet*. Inside the author publishes a quote, "Money without a budget is like champagne without a glass." That would be a great inspirational quote to be able to then link to budget tips that you might have, it's a great way to tie that in. There's a lot out there, I would really encourage you to think of how can you inspire your audience, it's a really good way to engage them.

Then witty photos. Humor in any capacity can be a little bit tricky. I know that I'm actually showing an image of Chase here on in particular, but you can go a little too far with the humor, and you have to be really careful about that. I'm saying use humor and use wit, it's a good way to engage, but don't use it too often and when you're using it, you need to make sure that it's actually relevant, and it's not going to offend anyone. Definitely keep that in mind.

On to the next slide, we'll get into animation. I'm not seeing a lot of financial institutions using animation on social media, but you really should be because it's really engaging. I love this example, in particular, that Chase did, it was a story and Instagram, and I think stories, and also Facebook video is a great place to use animation. Here, they were doing a checklist for getting the most out of their IRA. Now, an IRA is not that exhilarating, not really that exciting, doesn't really get a lot of people fired up, [chuckles] but the way that they did it with a checklist, so the check marks would actually move as the story was going on, thought was a really good way to present content.

I would really encourage you to think of different ways that you might use animation. Adobe Spark is a good platform, for those that are looking for an alternative 'cause animation can be pretty expensive. That was actually designed for marketers that don't have a background in design. I would encourage you to check that out. I also would encourage you if you're using Stories, which I do think you should be, make sure you tell people to swipe up like they did don't assume that people know what to do. I think that's a common, misconception that I see.

Then real-life perspective, I love this category because this is really relatable. This really brings in that human aspect that I was talking about earlier. This example, in particular, Arizona Central Credit Union, what they did is they took a young relatable couple sitting around the table talking about financial topics like in particular, this one was avoiding fraud. It was really relatable, it wasn't a big production. As you can see they're legitimately sitting around a kitchen table looks like and they have their captions turned on, which is great.

If you're using Facebook or Instagram video, you should be using captions, but it's just really relatable and really something that readers are can listen to and see and get some advice from. I would encourage you to not overthink your video and to look at ideas like Arizona central did to really connect with your audience.

All right, onto the next, office hours. I love this concept of office hours. It's something that you hear a lot in college, but you don't hear it as much in the professional world. I liked how Girlbar which is this brand that I follow how they incorporated their office hours. What they did is they took an animated video and you can't see it here 'cause it's a static image, but the hands on that clock actually moved. Then it linked over to Instagram TV to have their CEO answering live questions. I'm not necessarily saying you need to do that flow, but the concept of office hours is something that I think would resonate with our audience.

Finding an expert within the organization, whether that be someone from your mortgage department, or maybe it is someone in investment and saying just taking a little bit of time to share those office hours and questions that you might be getting from your account holders. It's a good way to engage and use video and not need a lot of production for that.

Quizzes and trivia, this definitely isn't something new. I think quizzes and trivia have been around for quite some time. I will say that I really like how Golden One Credit Union, how they are using quizzes and trivia within their Stories. This is an Instagram story again, I think stories I've said it a couple of times. I think Instagram Stories are underutilized. Here they're asking questions as they're live at Kings Arena, which is the Sacramento Kings basketball arena, so asking questions there. Now Instagram stories, they just launched an actual quiz where you can put in questions and you can see if a question is right or wrong. That's a great way to be engaging your audience.

I also love simple animation again, The Skimm, a news outlet that I follow. They did a really interesting animated video where they had a simple question and the answer so A, B, and C as that clock where you see the six, as I started to roll down, those answers started to come forward. It was a great engaging way. I wanted to keep that up so that I could watch and see what the right answer was. I would encourage you to potentially do

a post like that and then you can check out how they did it by going to The Skimm. I love that.

Then on the next slide, expert insight. I think the term tips and tricks, it's a little overplayed by us marketers, but I'm guilty of it 100%, but how about we rethink how we position this and call it expert insights? Because we really are the financial experts. Let's start to think of ourselves that way. How do we shift our mindset to do that? I really like to use a couple of examples of people using expert insights. Beyond Bank, they shared expert tips on how to decide if you're ready to or not to apply for a credit card. You can see that on the far left, I thought that was really great because they coupled it with a picture of young people at a coffee shop really relatable. I could see people that were looking at that image, they would be probably looking for a credit card, so it really fit in. I like that.

BMO Harris Bank, they use Cyber Security Awareness Month to share helpful tips of banking safely. The video really caught my attention. You can see right here on the screen, how to spot a phishing email, I think that's really relevant to a lot of people, really in your face. I absolutely stopped and watched what was happening here. Ideas like that. Then PenFed took a little bit of a different avenue. They shared something from a local news site on planning for the holiday and saving. I love that look for other experts that you can bring in as well doesn't always have to be you.

Then WeWork, I told you that's the brand I really like to follow. I love their sponsored story, the colors here you can see really engaging, the only thing that's missing here, they don't have a swipe up so I didn't really know what to do with it. A lesson learned from there. Expert insights, how can we bring that into our net.

On the next slide, contests. This is definitely not new, I'm sure most of you have done some sort of contest, maybe a photo contest. I know I hear that one quite frequently. The reason that I brought this Punjab National Bank one forward is because I absolutely loved how they tied in the launch of a mobile app with a contest. It's actually requiring, the question that they were asking was about their tagline and their new assets

that they launched. They were asking readers on social media what their tagline was. It really required those account holders to engage with the new app, which I love because it wasn't just a where's your favorite place to vacation or something along those lines. It was really tied into an action that the bank wanted readers to take. I love that as an example. If you're launching a new mobile app, launching a new website, it's a great way to involve your followers there.

Then polls. Unlike contests, I think polls are underutilized on social. They're not just great for being able to engage your followers but they are really great for social listening. If there's some particular questions that you want to see what your followers

are thinking, do a poll that's really based on the social listening aspect. Here you can see is just an example of Airbnb. On Instagram, they have a yes no options. Facebook has their own polling. There's a lot available for you but I would really encourage you to use it for market research. How can you use that to develop your strategy moving forward?

Then questions. On the next slide, you'll see this is what you really commonly see questions being asked. It really is a great way to draw people in. Redwood Credit Union, they actually did a post on Nextdoor. That the platform that you don't hear that often, it's a neighborhood app, I love it, in San Francisco. I follow it religiously for all my advice on the neighborhood. I don't know if it resonates in every marketplace, but you should definitely look into it if you have a community that really has a large presence on Nextdoor, it's a great platform.

You can see here, they did a promoted post about planning for the new year. That was in January when I saw this, which was really relevant because that's where people go for things like mortgages and redoing their homes and all those types of things. Then you can see also some other examples. I love this Bank of America with cheese. It sounds silly. That's a beautiful picture of a cheese board, but they ask with free Cheddar, it's all Gouda so they're putting a little bit of humor. "Here's a tough question, would you give up to be debt free?" They're bringing in the whole concept of debt but they're making it something relatable and fun to the audience. They got a ton of engagement there.

Then same with Public Service Credit Union. "Would you rather have \$50,000 in cash or \$100,000 in Amazon credit?" That was really interesting as well to see what others are posting, Questions are a great way to get followers engaged.

On the next slide. Just thinking of research as long as expert insight so keeping that in mind. Then also holidays. I would encourage you not to just post a picture of a Santa Hat and say happy holidays. Don't say happy holidays for no reason. That's not really engaging. Think of ways that you can actually tie in what you do, or make it relatable to who you are as a brand. Example, Travis Credit Union, they had someone who met their future spouse at a branch and then also Earth Day tying that into going paperless. That's actually really, really relevant.

Then just really quickly here, I want to go through a couple more slides. If you can go to the next one. Promotion, making sure that you get your promotion in and actually are able to promote your products and services. Don't do it too often but don't miss an opportunity to be able to get your card or your app out in front of everyone. Then I want to save time for questions. Just demystifying management, I really love this particular example that you can see here of the CEO that actually went out at Spire Credit Union

and sat with local vendors and local businesses and really told their story. I think that was a great way to really humanize their CEO and I would follow them if I were you.

Then you can skip through the next slide. People power, we talked a little bit about People Power and you can see these slides. I'm sure the team will share them with you. Then on the ground, just getting out there, I really encourage you to do Citizen's Bank and get out there or add a personal touch like Suncoast Credit Union did as well. Then this is the last one, but just spotlight local. Really show how you're getting out there and in the community.

Christine, I think it would be helpful if you could share these slides. Everyone would be able to see these examples in real time. Then just to close up, it leads us all back to the beginning. If you're ever feeling overwhelmed, it's really helpful to just think of these three key areas. How can you humanize, optimize and visualize and then how can you look at these categories and find different ways to invigorate your social media, and that's that.

Christine: Thank you so much, Alexander. This is Christine. On top of it, humanize, optimize and visualize. While you were going through your content, I wrote down a few other key points that I think really stood out as you spoke. I heard relatable, inspirational, story formats, animation, social listening, and engagement, which all are really important in today's social media environments. For those on the phone, we will be sharing this presentation as well as the recording and you'll get an email in a week or so with that information and so don't worry about getting the content.

In terms of questions. If anyone has a question for Alexandra, you could enter that question in the chat box called questions in your webinar panel. We've got a few here, Alexandra, to start. Again folks, if you want to ask a question to Alexander, we welcome that in the questions section in your webinar panel. First question here, Alexandra, is do you have any advice on what types of images resonate on Instagram versus Facebook and should I post the same posts on both platforms?

Alexander: That's a great question. With Facebook, it might sound kind of strange but images that feature body parts like hands, they actually resonate better on Facebook. Then on Instagram, it's faces. Faces and entire bodies, they resonate more. Also on Facebook, brighter colors tend to resonate whereas on Instagram shades of blue and more white space tend to resonate. Obviously, that's not always the case but those are just some basic tips that I found over time. You should not necessarily be posting the same thing on Instagram as you post on Facebook.

There are different audiences. People are looking for different things when they're on both of the platforms. My best advice would be to test and see what types of posts are actually resonating on your platform and base it off of that.

Christine: Thanks, Alexander. For those on the phone, we do a stop time in one minute, but Alexander has kindly offered to stay for another five or 10 minutes to get more questions answered. We have a number of them coming through now. For those who are able to continue and stay with us, that's great. For the rest of you, thanks for being here and we will be back in touch shortly with some information about next month's webcast as well as links to getting to see the recording and the transcript of today's session.

Alexandra, the next question is, with Facebook's new algorithm, our posts are only shown to a few people unless we boost it. Any tips on how to get more people to see our posts?

Alexander: That's a good question. I would say that there's just a lot of truth. If you can start to do their stories, that's a way to be able to get up front more. I would say though that boosted posts on Facebook are what-- I actually just posted a digital marketing round table recently and both of the institutions in the room are saying how much success they've had on a small budget with boosted posts on Facebook. Unfortunately, the organic native posts, they're not the same as they used to be. That's definitely the case. The more that you can use Stories, the more that you can put a little bit more budget into Facebook to boost, I think will be worth it.

I will say looking at some of the categories that I showed earlier that got high levels of sharing, if you can get others even if someone sees that and they have the ability to share, if you can do more posts like that, that's going to be really really helpful. I shared some of them before. Some of the funnier ones, some of them more nostalgia ones. Some of the community ones, if you can have others, if you're out in a local coffee shop and you can have them share as well, trying to think of ways to engage other brands to get your reading to be larger. You do have to add some paid into the mix.

Christine: That's great. Thanks. Next question is how can small community banks engage in this process at a low cost?

Alexander: As I mentioned, Facebook, I really encourage you if you haven't done any of their boosted ads, they are pretty affordable on a small budget. I would say for a lot of institutions haven't gotten actually out into social media because of that very aspect is budget and just thinking that they're not going to be able to be seen, but I think finding ways as I mentioned-- On one of the last slides that I didn't really get to talk about, there was an example of an institution or a picture. I belonged to or I live close to Amco Bank and they do a spotlight of different local vendors every single month. Then they can post that on social and then those people can promote the bank on their social. It was like a pottery vendor I think is the one that I saw. I love that.

Find ways that you can engage with the community first and foremost. I think it's just most important to just try to get started and try to see if you can start doing these posts and see what happens. Spicing it up and trying to do different things. There's some people that use micro influencers. I'm not as big a fan of that because I think from a financial institution standpoint, it's really hard for us to make sure that those micro influencers are representing our brand the way that we want them to. I would be a little bit cautious about that, but I've definitely seen people do that.

One other thing is maybe thinking of internally, if you can build a group of brand ambassadors, that's another thing that I've seen some institutions doing. They have internal social media brand ambassadors that they train and then they spread the word out that way. That might be a program that you might consider as well.

Christine: Okay, great. Thanks, Alexander. Just a couple more questions here and then we'll let you go. The question is, what sites do you use to create images to post to Facebook?

Alexander: I use, I talked about Adobe Spark for the animation. Personally, we use a mix of a lot of different platforms. We use Canva a lot. We love Canva internally. That's a great one to use. They have a paid option. I feel like we use a free option or we use the low-cost option. We don't spend a lot of money on it at all. I Love Canva. I use this VSCO, V-S-C-O for editing. I really liked them from an app perspective. I use the scope but there's a ton out there. I would say I do have a designer on my team who does use InDesign. Sometimes if we need or southern shop if we did something really particular, but I will say that Canva is the one that we use probably the most to develop our images.

Christine: Great. Thank you. Last question. Should we be using LinkedIn as a part of our social strategy?

Alexander: Yes, absolutely. I was just with at the Financial Brand conference a couple of weeks ago and LinkedIn kept coming up more and more. What I've found is that a lot of brands are just using LinkedIn for recruiting. While I think that it's important for recruiting, I think you should bill your brand, show your people. I agree with that. I think you also should be promoting your expert insights content on LinkedIn as well. Because, for example, I'm in the stage of my life where I'm potentially looking to get a mortgage. I'm on LinkedIn regularly from a professional standpoint. I'm always looking for advice on how should I start the mortgage process.

Just because it's a professional network it's still people, consumers that are, that are on there and looking for insights. You just have to make sure that you're presenting things in more of that expert insights research social proof type posts. Not necessarily the

humor posts. That not really the channel for that, but your professional expert tips, you should 100% be using that network.

Christine: Great. Well, thank you so much. Unfortunately, it looks like that is all the time we have for today. Following today's program, we'll be sending an email with links to the recording of this presentation as well as a quick two-minute survey asking for feedback on today's program. Also, we look for ideas for future topics. Once you receive that, you're welcome to share that recording with any of your colleagues who have missed today's session. Also, please join us on June 20th for the next Informed Banker presentation given by Samira Salem of CUNA with an economic update for all.

Alexander, again, thanks so much for sharing with us today, and I'd like to extend a really sincere thank you to the many financial services professional who made time in their busy schedules to be with us today. Hope to see you all again at future Informed Banker sessions. That concludes today's session. Thanks again for joining us.