

Pinterest vs Instagram: The battle of the photo continues



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12 Feb 2015

We'll never have a shortage of challenges as the digital creeper sprouts out new [vines](#) at an uncontrollable speed. Pruning seems impossible because you have to keep following the consumer to be relevant and emerge as a brand.

Just as marketing professionals are slowly coming to grips with the correct implementation of social media strategies on Facebook and Twitter, a new challenge has emerged. It's the visually dominant platforms, Pinterest and Instagram.

Companies that don't have profiles on these networks (Instagram and Pinterest) overlook them when it comes to planning their social media campaigns. The reason - most campaigns focus on gaining new fans and followers on the likes of Facebook and Twitter.

Remember that increasing your fan base through social media is only one benefit of many. These two mediums are ideal for visual brands that relate to food, fashion, beauty, lifestyle and media. You are missing wonderful opportunities if you don't expand your reach beyond Facebook and Twitter.

Both of these visual platforms have been around since 2010. They are, however, both still in their infancy in terms of being embraced by marketers as the majority of marketers in South Africa are only now turning their attention to these mediums.



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But by using these visual content networks, brands can resonate emotionally with audiences and help them learn more about their business.

What's appealing about these two platforms?

Your average consumer receives about 5,000 advertising messages per day. This is a massive amount of information to process. The challenge is to be the brand that breaks through this clutter that is becoming more and more every day.

Did you know that people process images 60,000 times faster than text? And did you know that 90% of information transmitted to your brain is visual?

That is exactly the reason why Pinterest and Instagram are on fire under consumers. They're VISUAL! Herein lie many opportunities for marketers to fight their way through the clutter and achieve both branding and ROI objectives.

At a glance, both these platforms seem like similar visual content sharing networks. By looking a bit closer, you'll notice there are substantial differences between the two.

But what is the main difference between Pinterest and Instagram?

Pinterest - the fastest growing social media platform, ever!

With Pinterest, a user's intent is primarily focused on discovering and gathering other users' content. Similar to a search engine, users can use Pinterest to search for specific content or products. It's a virtual notice board that lets people share images and links. A shared image is called a "pin" that can be virtually "pinned" onto theme-based online "boards."

Due to the fact that every "pin" serves as a link to the source of the image, marketers use this successfully to generate traffic towards their own websites. Pinterest is wonderful for SEO. Did you know that from September 2012 to September 2013 Pinterest drove more referral traffic to publishers than Twitter, Reddit and LinkedIn combined?

Added to this, Pinterest reaches a 70% - 80% female audience. According to [RJ Metrics](#) an average of 158 "pins" has been made by each female "pinner."

Pinterest is a proven sales generator for retail businesses. The key focus of this platform is the fact that it is inspirational. It is the "I want" social media, almost like a digital version of a catalogue.

It's all about the yum on Pinterest

Without a doubt, food is the most active topic on Pinterest, with 57% of pinners discussing food-related content. With the high female audience it is also not surprising that [Nordstrom](#), a fashion and fashion accessory e-commerce destination, is the top pinned brand.

Pinterest has more brands present on their network, but less of them are active. Shout "BOOM" if you see an opportunity here.

Conversion rates for Pinterest traffic are 50% higher than that from other traffic sources. This network has also introduced more users to retailers than Facebook and Twitter. They are leading the race with regards to first-touch marketing.

Instagram - #selfie heaven

Instagram is about social media visual content creation. It's a free photo-sharing application for iPhone and Android users. Once users take photos, they often select filters to add pizzazz to their images.

It is about creating images and is the ideal tool to transform boring photos into works of art. It is where instamatic amateur photography meet professional level quality. These photos are then shared to a variety of other social networking services, such as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr - to name a few.

An interesting fact about Instagram is that it has 50 times the engagement rate of Facebook and 20 times that of Twitter. Two-thirds of Instagrammers use the network daily, compared to only a quarter of Pinterest users being active daily.

Where Pinterest is all about "I want", Instagram is the ultimate "me, me, me" social media option. It is a network where the user is accelerated by a fear of losing out (FOMO) and is fuelled by the community's envy and jealousy. Therefore, photos that are shared are better than reality, adding more gloss to the photos and experience.

Who's really using Instagram?

This platform appeals mostly to a younger audience. They are mostly younger than 35. Like Pinterest, women are responsible for most of the traffic and interaction. The skew in the split is, however, much less than with Pinterest, at a 45% male user demographic. More than 1 in 5 teenagers (aged 13 - 18) use Instagram regularly. This is the network for the millennials and GenXers.

Instagram is fun and easy to use. In the third quarter of 2014, 70 million photos were shared per day. On top of this, 2.5 billion photos are "liked" on Instagram per day - close to 29,000 per second!

Instagram appeals to both consumer brands and B2B marketers. The Instagram user is looking for a far more personal experience with the brands they follow and engage with. The type of content shared here should give your company a more authentic view into your business. It's never been easier to create stunning photos that make your business look professional and creative. A total of 58% of the [Interbrand Top 100 Companies/Brands](#) have active accounts on Instagram, with brand frequency at about five images per week.

Instagram is great when you want your audience to create user-generated content about you. Retailers are increasing this strategy to get people to get creative about their brand, on their behalf. The power of their audiences' content is displayed by showcasing their Instagram images. This user-generated content is implied as an endorsement by the consumer for your brand. It's about brand awareness and is a wonderful medium to build your brand. Your brand becomes the centrepiece of your story. Where Pinterest will drive sales, Instagram will build your brand.

So - did Instagram give birth to 2013's international word of the year "Selfie"?

Theoretically, the answer is no. According to [Wikipedia](#): "Robert Cornelius, an American pioneer in photography, produced a daguerreotype of himself in 1839, which is also one of the first photographs of a person. Because the process was slow, Cornelius was able to run into the shot for a minute or more, and then replace the lens cap. He recorded on the back 'The first light picture ever taken'."

But what about the word in recent times? The term use of "selfie" can be traced back to 2002 when it was used in an [Australian ABC online forum](#) by a young drunk who described a self-portrait of his injured lip.

One would, however, credit Instagram with the tag of the social media network that made the "selfie" the phenomenon it is today.

Pictures are worth 1,000 words - or more

The most obvious similarity between Pinterest and Instagram is the fact that they are both visual social media platforms. For the rest, they are different animals that need to be handled individually from a marketing perspective.

The most obvious error you can make is to have a "one size fits all" strategy when it comes to your social media marketing

implementation. There's no doubt that you have to be part of this visual social media revolution to compete as a retailer and as a brand.

Get visual. Get creative. Get seen.

ABOUT DRIES BADENHORST

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