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# Instagram

# POWER

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Reach More Customers with  
the Power of Pictures

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*To Janice Hammond  
and the other staff members of  
the Lincoln Elementary Learning Center  
and to my mother*

---

In fourth grade, I moved to a new school, Lincoln Elementary in Yuba City, California. The teachers there quickly discovered that I hadn't been taught how to read or write adequately. It turned out that I was profoundly behind the other kids in my grade level, so each day for most of the class periods I would go to the Learning Center instead of the regular classrooms. It was a humiliating three years. My only comfort was recess, where I was officially known as the second fastest runner in the school. I hoped my speed on the field could make up for my slowness in the classroom. Of course, it didn't.

One teacher in the learning center, Janice Hammond, was particularly helpful. She showed me the ropes and made reading and writing fun. Then toward the end of the sixth grade, I passed the tests necessary to be put back into the general population. Shortly after, my mom read one of my school writing assignments and said, "Jason, you're a writer." I'll never forget that moment. Those words had power and sank in pretty deep. So thanks, Janice Hammond and the other Learning Center staff members at Lincoln Elementary; I owe you a special debt of gratitude. You showed me that writing is fun. It's a lesson that has served me really well. And thanks, Barbara Miles, for telling me I was a writer. You have been the most encouraging person in my life. I'll always be grateful for all you've done for me.

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# Acknowledgments

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# Introduction

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The world is migrating to smart mobile devices. Are you ready? These powerful new handheld tools include iPhones, iPads, Kindles, and similar Internet-enabled products. The worldwide adoption of these web-enabled tools is revolutionizing the online experience, including social media marketing.

Chances are, most people you know have a smartphone and several “i” products, too. How people access your website is shifting radically. In the fourth quarter of 2011, we saw a simple illustration of this fact that might surprise you. On September 9, 2012, CNNMoney.com reported that Apple’s revenue from iPhone sales alone exceeded all of Microsoft’s product lines combined. iPhone revenue for the 12 months prior was \$74.3 billion, whereas Microsoft revenue was \$73 billion. The iPhone business, if it were a stand-alone company, would be a Fortune 500 powerhouse. It would appear that the once dominant computer giant Microsoft and all that it represents is being dwarfed by smartphones, not to mention tablets such as the iPad and Kindle Fire.

How does Instagram fit into this picture? This book is about leveraging the first social media site “born mobile” to create your first mobile marketing campaign. Instagram is your gateway drug to becoming a hard-core mobile marketer.

In the fall of 2012, Instagram surpassed 100 million users and shocked marketers into realizing that this massive migration to mobile is real—and is happening more quickly than we might have expected. You might be wondering, *Why exactly should I learn how to use Instagram to market my business?* It’s a good question and one that you shouldn’t ignore. You need to decide if migrating to mobile is right for you. We are all in some form of social media overload, aren’t we? So adding another social media site, even if it is low maintenance, can seem like a burden.

At my company, Liberty Jane Clothing, we decided it was important for us to be on Instagram after learning a set of surprising facts. This book chronicles our journey as well as the journey of other early adopters who are seeing solid success as a result of their Instagram work. Wondering what those facts were? Ready for a pop quiz? Let’s see how well you do answering these questions:

1. How many cell phones exist worldwide?
2. How many of those are smartphones (i.e., capable of Internet browsing)?
3. How fast did the percentage of smartphones grow in 2012?
4. What percentage of U.S. adults owned a tablet or e-reader in 2009, and what did that number grow to in 2012?
5. By 2013, what is the expected number of tablet users?
6. Does Internet traffic from mobile devices exceed that of desktop web surfers in any large country?
7. What percentage of overall Internet traffic comes from smartphones?
8. Which is faster, the 4G LTE mobile network or high-speed DSL for your home?
9. On Black Friday 2012, what percentage of shopping occurred on mobile devices, and what was that number two years prior?

Let's see how you did answering the quiz and walk through the answers to these questions together. You might be surprised at the results.

---

- **Question:** How many cell phones exist worldwide?

**Answer:** According to analyst Mary Meeker, at the end of 2012 there were 5 billion cell phones in use globally. She published the findings in her annual Global Trends Report. The planet has 7 billion people, but many of them are children. So while it is certainly true that not everyone on the planet has a cell phone, most certainly do. For marketers, this fact is not only shocking but also instructive.

I first realized how prevalent and powerful mobile phones were in 2008 when I went to the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho in southern Africa. I saw very poor women in extremely rural areas walking in a single-file line up to the top of a small hilltop. When I asked what they were doing, I was told they were walking up to the high ground to get a good cell signal to make a call. I was fascinated. There was no landline phone service in these areas and no electric utility providers. We were in the middle of nowhere, and yet cell phone technology had changed these ladies' lives.

I decided I had to learn more, so I met with several women who were HIV/AIDS caregivers in the community. I asked them through a translator if they used a cell phone, and they all said yes. I asked them if they had their phones on them, and again they all said yes. Then they reached into their blouses and pulled their cell phones out. Their practice was to carry their cell phones in their bras and pull them out as needed. They had a community system of using car batteries to charge their phones. There was a system that worked for them and enabled easy communication. That was more than five years ago now. I can only imagine how things have changed and how they will change in the next few years.

- **Question:** How many of those are smartphones?

**Answer:** In her report, Mary Meeker went on to state that 1 billion of the phones on the planet are smartphones.

- **Question:** How fast did the percentage of smartphones grow in 2012?

**Answer:** Mary Meeker noted that smartphone adoption grew in 2012 at a rate of 42 percent and that the trend is predicted to continue. Imagine how our HIV/AIDS community caregivers are going to respond when they have smartphones. Will they be able to afford the data plan? If they could, I can only imagine Siri on an iPhone trying to answer complicated questions related to their work.

- **Question:** What percentage of U.S. adults owned a tablet or e-reader in 2009, and what did that number grow to in 2012?

**Answer:** It's not just smartphones that are changing the world. Tablets are a whole new option as well. In 2012, roughly 29 percent of U.S. adults own a tablet or e-reader, up from 2 percent less than three years previous (Meeker). By 2013, the number of U.S. tablet users is expected to reach 99 million, according to eMarketer.com. That is roughly 33 percent of the population. So what is the conclusion? Bob Parsons, CEO of GoDaddy.com, says "It's a fact that the personal computer as we know it today is going to go the way of the eight-track tape."

- **Question:** What percentage of overall Internet traffic comes from smartphones?

**Answer:** In India, mobile Internet traffic surpassed desktop traffic in May 2012 (Meeker). ~~The trend is occurring in other countries as well and will continue to become the new normal. It is not an exaggeration to say that the “current normal” web surfing experience will soon be a mobile experience.~~

- **Question:** Which is faster, the 4G LTE mobile network or high-speed DSL for your home?

**Answer:** According to digitaltrends.com, in head-to-head comparisons of which Internet services were the fastest, the Verizon 4G LTE network performed better than high-speed DSL. It was not as good as the top-tier cable services, but price is a significant factor, so the conclusion was that “there is no question that cable is the faster, if you can afford the upper tiers . . . For the best deal, we ended up preferring Verizon LTE for a steady 12–15 Mbps connection speed and smooth video.”

- **Question:** What percentage of overall Internet traffic comes from smartphones?

**Answer:** Although there are conflicting estimates, the amount of Internet traffic that is mobile based is remarkable and growing quickly. In May 2012, Chitika, an online advertising network, reported that roughly 20 percent of U.S. and Canadian Internet traffic now comes from mobile devices. Mary Meeker reported similar findings and said that in December 2009, Internet traffic coming from mobile devices was reportedly just 1 percent, but that three years later, that number had grown to 13 percent. So the experts are saying between 13 and 20 percent of all Internet traffic is mobile traffic.

I didn’t believe those numbers were accurate. They seemed way too high. So I looked into our company’s website statistics and found out some startling facts. Our primary e-commerce site has roughly 500,000 page views a month with close to 100,000 visitors. It’s not big by corporate standards, but it’s a large enough data set to get some good insight into what is happening. I’ll save those findings for a more complete discussion on this topic in [Chapter 18](#).

- **Question:** On Black Friday 2012, what percentage of shopping occurred on mobile devices, and what was that number two years prior?

**Answer:** If there is one national sales holiday in the United States that should give us good insight into this trend toward mobile devices, it’s Black Friday. Traditionally, the day after Thanksgiving is a massive selling event. On Black Friday of 2010, 6 percent of online shopping occurred on a mobile device. On Black Friday of 2012, that number skyrocketed to 24 percent. Within a few years, mobile shopping could be the primary way in which consumers participate in Black Friday online sales.

## The Shift in Social Behavior

This is all interesting, and possibly even shocking, but you might be asking, *How does this relate to a book about marketing on Instagram?* The answer is simple. As mentioned at the beginning of this Introduction, Instagram is the first social media site born mobile. While most social networks have a mobile app that allows users to access their accounts effectively, Instagram was conceived and created exclusively for that purpose. Learn Instagram marketing, and you’ll be well on your way to learning the whole new world of mobile marketing.

In the upcoming chapters, you’ll learn:



- How to get up and running on Instagram
- 
- How to create a marketing plan
  - How to leverage the social networking attributes of Instagram
  - How to use the site effectively for advertising
  - How to launch products
  - How to measure and track all your work

Instagram provides an opportunity for you to bring your company into the new mobile revolution without complexity or drama. So keep reading and let's see how quickly we can get your Instagram marketing efforts up and running.

# THE MOBILE MIGRATION

Instagram

## The Mobile Native

Instagram is the breakout social network of the iPhone revolution. In less than two years, it has grown into a full-fledged social network that boasts more than 100 million users. In August 2012, Instagram passed Twitter in terms of daily active users on mobile devices (comScore). The pace of user adoption is staggering. In a single six-month period, Instagram went from 887,000 daily active users to 7.3 million (comScore).

Marketers have not been slow to leverage the new tool, as over 50 percent of top brands are now using Instagram (Marketing Land). Ben & Jerry's Homemade ice cream company is a good example of how smart marketers are leveraging this new platform. Ben & Jerry's is asking its fans to "capture euphoria" and share it on Instagram. How do you do that? You simply take a picture with your Ben & Jerry's ice cream, upload it to Instagram, and include the hashtag #captureeuphoria. Don't worry; we'll explain how hashtags work throughout the course of this book. When Ben & Jerry's customers upload a picture, it is automatically added to a special collection of thousands of fan photos. The Ben & Jerry's team will then use 20 of the photos as part of local print advertising campaigns, making those Instagram contributors local celebrities.

It seems clear that the marketing battlefield has shifted again. Mobile devices are the new place to be. In the 1990s, offline businesses like ice cream shops raced to develop websites to get a competitive edge over each other.

In the 2000s, those same companies raced to get a presence on the social networks; Facebook was their home base. They worked hard to find ways to engage their customers in conversations and contests. The goal was to build a social community around their brands.

In this new decade, those same companies are racing to migrate their efforts to mobile devices. As smartphones become more commonplace and alternative mobile devices like tablets grow in popularity, the rationale for mobile marketing becomes stronger. When the competition is doing mobile marketing, the pressure to operate in the new environment intensifies.

Additionally, as new apps like Instagram emerge, the marketing itself becomes very straightforward. Smart marketers have recognized that many of the same strategies that work effectively on other platforms work just as well or better on Instagram. It turns out that effective mobile marketing isn't that foreign after all.

Why are so many marketers excited about Instagram? It's the first significant social network built specifically to work on a mobile device. It's a pioneer in that regard. Whereas Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest were born on the web and adapted to mobile devices, Instagram is a mobile native. Surprisingly, Twitter didn't have a smartphone app until four years after it was founded. While it was based on text messaging, it was envisioned as a microblogging tool, not a smartphone tool. Instagram's functionality was designed for ease of use on the iPhone and other Apple products, and it has subsequently been rolled out for Android devices. While Instagram recently added a website version of the app for user profiles, the functionality all resides on mobile devices. The website version allows for simple viewing of the content and not much more.

## POWER TIP

A *mobile device* is a reference to any type of mobile phone or similar device, such as an iPod Touch, iPad, or other tablet that uses cellular technology.

Why does it help marketers that Instagram was born on a mobile device and is exclusively mobile in nature? It's a fairly simple answer: it was designed to do one thing very elegantly—share photos. That simplicity of focus has real power.

## The App Revolution

In 2007, the iPhone revolutionized the phone industry and created a new standard for phone technology. The smartphone got smarter. Buttons were out, and touch screens were in. This was more than a leap in technology; it created a new type of user engagement with phones. People expected the phones to serve as fully functional devices that seamlessly worked with the Internet, provided additional tools like a camera, and allowed them to constantly monitor e-mail and social media conversations. The bar had been permanently raised.

On July 11, 2008, as part of the iPhone 2.0 release, Apple launched the App Store, a store accessed on the iPhone that allows users to install third-party applications on their phones without ever connecting to a computer. Apps became a vital part of the iPhone revolution, and over 1 billion were downloaded in the first year.

This new ecosystem quickly fostered a booming industry. Third-party developers could create an app, upload it to the App Store, and, if they were lucky, see massive revenue start to roll in. Applications were developed for all sorts of user purposes, and although the games category led the way, other applications found their place too.

Apple was quick to christen the new catchphrase for this mobile revolution—“There’s an app for that” became the mantra. This catchphrase became the natural response to almost any question that came to mind. The clever Apple marketers methodically drove home the statement in ad after ad, ensuring that people knew that if they had a problem, the App Store had a solution. Apple even went so far as to trademark the saying so that other competitors couldn’t use it.

According to CNET, Apple had over 700,000 apps available for its operating system as of October 2012, and Google had that same number for its Android operating system, which has grown to become the primary rival to the Apple ecosystem. Even Microsoft has 120,000 apps available for its smartphone operating system. The three systems were all clearly working hard to rapidly expand the options available for their users.

## Your Tribe Is Sharing Photos

In 2008, Seth Godin introduced us all to the concept of “tribes” and declared that marketers must lead a tribe with the permission and respect of the followers. So regardless of whether you’ve identified your tribe or not, your tribe is taking and sharing photos at a phenomenal rate. Your customers, fans, followers, and friends are jumping into Instagram. You might not know them, but if you share their interests, then you have an opportunity to engage with them. They are snapping photos of things they want, products they love, and places they visit. They are sharing their lives via Instagram. The only question is, *Are you going to join them on this new platform and begin to shape their experience?*

It shouldn't surprise us that taking and sharing photos is a national pastime; it has been incredibly popular since 1885 when George Eastman started manufacturing paper film. From the early days of black-and-white photography to today, the quest to capture life through pictures has been an unwavering human addiction. The beauty of this newest evolution of the hobby is that smart marketers can participate in creative and engaging ways to promote their brands.

The evolution of photography occurred in several specific stages. First there were images produced on paper, and with them the modern art of photography was born. Photo albums abounded. Next came the popularization of the slide show, the technological breakthrough that every brother-in-law hated. The invitation "Let me set up the slide projector to show you our vacation pictures" became a dreaded after-dinner comment. Then came the instant camera revolution. The Polaroid Corporation did a tremendous job profiting from that wave of photography enthusiasm. Finally, this was followed by digital photography and the use of images stored on computers. Film and film cameras became relics. In this latest evolution, the integration of digital photography and social sharing has become a reality.

How popular is sharing images on Instagram? Recent statistics indicate that roughly 5 million images are shared every day. In the first two years of Instagram's existence, over 4 billion images were shared. This rate of sharing will compound as the rate of new users continues to grow.

## What Can You Do with Instagram?

If you're not familiar with the Instagram app yet, then let's go over the basic user functionality now; then in [Chapter 2](#) we'll walk you through the process of getting up and running quickly. The goal of this book is to focus on the marketing opportunities available via Instagram, so we'll only spend one chapter on the basic functionality of the site. It's important to remember that as a marketer, you are using Instagram differently than a personal user would. There is a big difference between your goals on the site and the goals of your customers.

Instagram leverages your smartphone's camera and image library, allowing you to choose a picture or video and apply camera effects to it. The effects include things like making the picture black and white, cropping it, adding a border, or saturating the image so the colors pop. You can always simply share an image in an unedited format as well. According to the site, almost half of all images are shared with no editing effects applied.

### POWER TIP

A *hashtag* is represented by the “#” preceding a word or preceding several words without spaces in between them. It allows simple categorization to be applied to an image. Anyone can make a hashtag.

Once you've decided about how the image should be edited, you can add a description. The description can include plain text, or it can include a hashtag. Hashtags provide an easy way to categorize your images. Chris Messina, a Twitter user who wanted a way to help categorize conversations, originally created the hashtag in 2007. The hashtag system has been seamlessly integrated into Instagram for easy categorization.

Hashtags also allow you to expand the reach of your image far beyond your own list of followers, so that anyone interested in that topic can see your image by simply searching for that hashtag. For

example, when we share an image that has the message “Red JANES coming soon to Liberty Jane Clothing #libertyjane #americangirldoll,” it not only will go to our followers, but will also be visible to anyone searching for the hashtag #libertyjane or the hashtag #americangirldoll, as in [Figure 1.1](#).



**Figure 1.1** Images with captions that include a hashtag will go to a broader audience.

With a nice picture and a meaningful description, you’re now ready to share the image. By finishing the upload process, your image is automatically shared with everyone who follows you on Instagram. Likewise, their images are made available to you when they upload a picture.

Once an image is shared, several social media standard behaviors can be used to engage with the image. We will discuss how to leverage these for social engagement in greater detail in later chapters but for now we’ll simply list them. They include:

- **Liking.** You can like the image as an expression of support.
- **Commenting.** You can leave a comment on a picture to join the conversation and make a statement. Your comments can include hashtags.
- **Sharing.** You can tweet about the images. Or if you uploaded the image yourself, you can share it to your Facebook account.

But Instagram has some limitations that might surprise you. At the time of this writing, there are a few things that you cannot do that you might expect to be able to do. They include:

- Adding a “clickable” URL in the description.
- 
- Editing your description once it is uploaded.
  - Adding a clickable URL in a comment.
  - Sharing an image that you like with your followers. This functionality, popularized by Pinterest, is not a feature of Instagram.

Now that you know what Instagram is and the history of the social network, let’s look at how my small business is using it to effectively engage with our tribe. Throughout this book, I’ll use many business examples, and we’ll focus together on various industries and niches so that you get a solid set of examples to learn from. But for this first chapter, I thought we should look at my own business as the example. Don’t worry; we aren’t trying to sell you anything. By sharing how we use Instagram, you get to know the following:

1. We are actually using Instagram effectively to grow our revenue for our small business.
2. This book is filled with best practices that are battle-tested and have been learned the hard way in the real world of competitive marketing. I’m not simply piling up social media platitudes and adapting them to Instagram. I am sharing from experience, not from theory.
3. I am an entrepreneur first and an author second. I don’t consider myself a social media expert; consider myself a marketer learning new things each day.

## **Up Close with Liberty Jane Clothing**

Liberty Jane Clothing is my thriving six-figure small business. We started on eBay in 2008 and have grown by leveraging the power of social media. Instagram has become a primary part of our social media strategy.

We design and sell in the doll clothes category, offering both physical and digital products. Our primary e-commerce site is Liberty Jane Patterns, with over 200,000 digital guidebooks downloaded to date and monthly page views exceeding 400,000.

Our social media work began on YouTube in 2008. We worked hard to create fun and interesting design contests and engage with our community of prospects. It turned out that our tribe likes to hang out on YouTube, so we started there. Today we have over 8,500 subscribers on our YouTube channel and over 1.5 million video views. We’ve leveraged that strength into the other social platforms (see [Figure 1.2](#)). Our next step was e-mail marketing, where we learned the power of driving direct traffic to our sites via newsletters. Our Facebook fan page came after that. We’ve worked hard and advertised extensively in order to get over 23,000 “likers” (formerly called fans) on Facebook. In 2011, we launched our Pinterest profile and quickly saw that site become our top source of social traffic. To document our Pinterest lessons, I cowrote the Amazon bestselling book *Pinterest Power*.

## Liberty Jane Clothing's Social Reach



**Figure 1.2** The Liberty Jane Clothing social reach

In 2012, we launched our Instagram profile and began learning how to engage with our tribe on the site. Our initial marketing strategy included six steps:

1. We began our Instagram work by sharing pictures of products from a “behind-the-scenes” perspective. Our goal was to allow our followers to see an insider’s view of our work. The idea of being a “visual insider” seemed like an appealing concept to our prospects and customers.
2. We began exploring the concept of using Instagram as a tool to enable a visual product launch. I’ll outline this strategy further in [Chapter 5](#). The visual product launch concept has become a significant strategy for us.
3. We took our YouTube contest strategy and adapted it to Instagram. Our Instagram design contest was an effective engagement tool and helped expand our reach significantly. I’ll outline this approach in [Chapter 12](#).
4. We integrated Instagram into our other websites, including our Facebook fan page and our company website. I will walk through the details of how to do this effectively in [Chapters 14](#) and [15](#).
5. We started systematically asking our existing customers, fans, and followers to follow us on Instagram. Our reasoning was that if they joined us on Instagram, they could introduce their friends to us.
6. We started exploring the hashtags associated with our niche and participating in the ongoing conversations. We started finding and following like-minded people.

### The Instagram Advantage

Three advantages immediately stand out when it comes to Instagram versus other social media sites:

- Instagram works flawlessly on mobile phones. While other sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest all have an app, Instagram is the only one that was born on the mobile phone and works



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