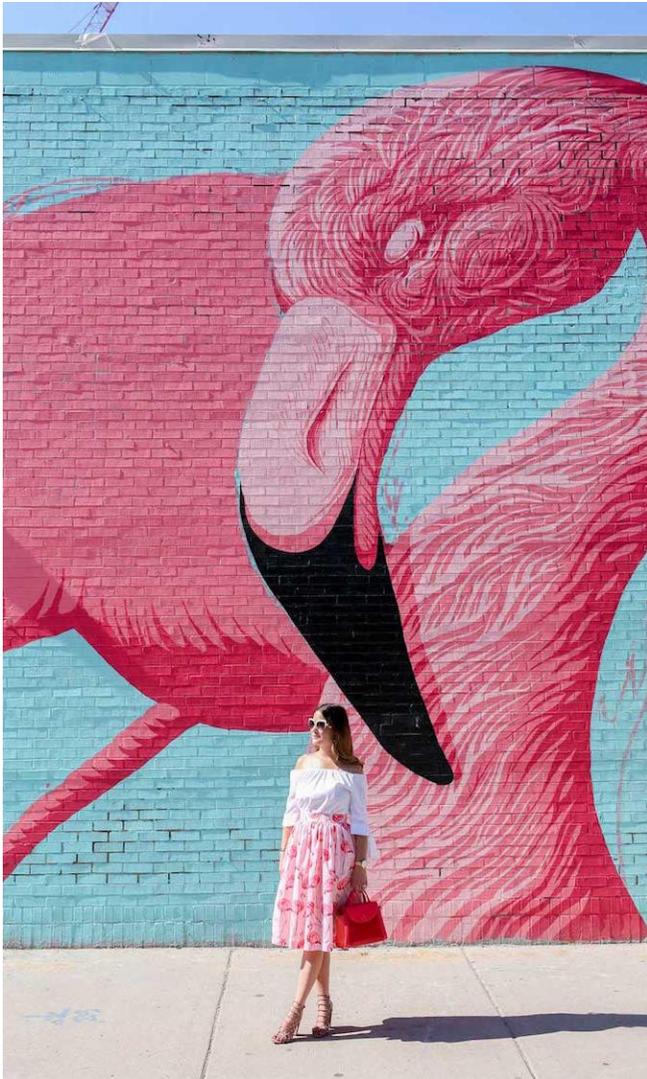


Is your venue Insta-worthy? How Instagram and social media is shaping entertainment and lifestyle design



By Becci Finn & Marc Nicholas

In our article [THINK 2019](#) we discussed the year ahead for hospitality and entertainment design. We looked at what's in and what's out in 2019, and how to position yourself to be relevant without being a victim of design trend-setters.

In an earlier article, [Pubs vs Clubs](#), we looked at the recent strength of the Pub and Hotel industry. In that article, we suggested that to appeal to a broader demographic Club's must begin to take the *Instagram-effect* seriously!

Unlike design trends which come and go, the age of the *Instagram-effect* is more than a trend. It's a cultural shift. As foreign as it may feel, you need to embrace it or be left behind.

Social Media...

When we refer to the *Instagram-effect* we're talking about more than just [Instagram](#), we're talking about all forms of 'social media' and 'social networking'.

In this article, however, we'll focus on *Instagram* due to its positioning in the social media landscape as a platform that's driven by *image* and *visuals* and is currently at the pointy end of marketing for entertainment and lifestyle venues.

We'll dive deeper into the *Insta-world* and hopefully leave you with a firmer grip on the impact and possibilities created using *Instagram* and other forms of social media. Or at the very least, enough info to satisfy a water-cooler-chat with the *Insta-savvy* members of your team.

To be '*Instagram ready*', or creating '*Instagrammable moments*', can be done in a variety of ways, but the main thing is that it's done with a style and approach that is tailored to showcase your message and brand.





But why...

The buzz and hoopla around *Instagram influencers*, *Instagrammable moments* and what look like culinary magazine shoots unfolding at dining tables as the food gets cold, can be a puzzling phenomenon.

However, when you strip back the hype and look beyond the generic phrase 'social media' and 'social networking', what is really happening is direct, targeted and clever marketing.

There are over 25 Million active business profiles on Instagram, and the content they're posting on Instagram is not just silly memes or who they hung out with on the weekend. It's about what they're consuming, what's cool, what's desirable, where they're going, why they're going there, what they ate there and how it made them feel.

Traditional media has become less relevant...

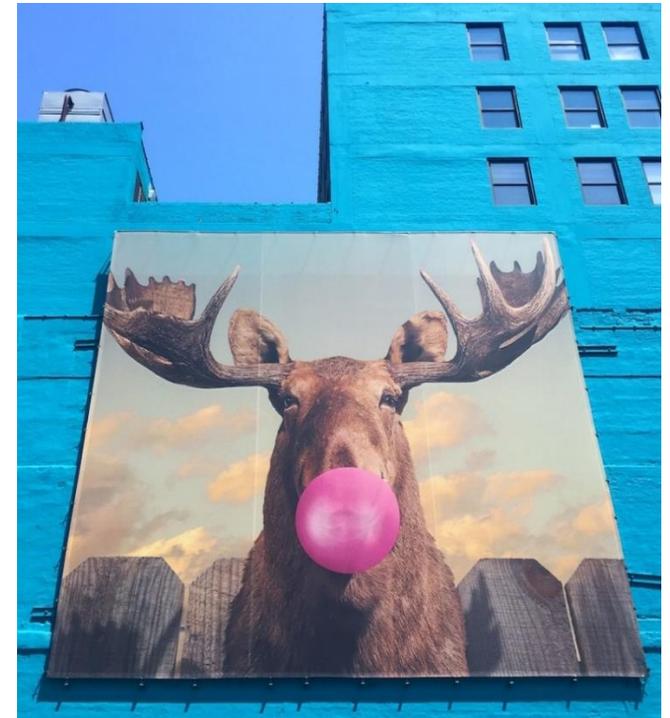
Millennials, Gen Z (and a good chunk of the rest of us) are no longer being reached by traditional TV commercials. Print-media is not considered cost-effective when compared with social media advertising reach.

Some would argue traditional media is already irrelevant.

Do you want a shock to your system? Follow [Gary Vaynerchuck](#) on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) to get his take on the social media landscape. He's almost a walking embodiment of social media.... he comes across as brash and egotistical, and it takes a while to 'get' him.

Like social media, he's uncensored and fanatical with language to match (be prepared for a barrage of 'expressive' language). But he, and the companies he's built, epitomise what can be achieved with well-executed social media strategies.

The infusion of Instagram into both business and personal use is well established and growing. Venues that respond, accommodate and harness this are setting themselves up to thrive.





Our phones...

These genius, intoxicating pieces of technology sit neatly in our palms, ready for action at the slightest sign of boredom.

Our phones have redefined consumerism.

*More than 60% of adults online use Instagram.
70% of those users have actively spent time
looking up a brand on the platform*

(Hubspot, Instagram Marketing, October 2018).

Where to start...

Imagine you are tasked to walk the street near your venue at a busy lunchtime, or during the after-work drinks slot, armed with nothing but one photo to convince a total stranger to come to your business.

To achieve that the photo needs to introduce your product in a way that excites, entices and is memorable.

Information overload means that images that inspire, surprise and delight are the minimum needed to cut through the chaos and drive interest.

Getting your business to the starting line can be simple. Do you have any Millennials working at your venue? Chances are the answer is 'yes'... and it'd be a short-priced bet that being a Millennial this person is also an Instagram expert.

A great place to start would be tasking some of your *Insta-expert-millennials* to capture something at the venue that could be *Instagrammable*. Who knows what retro-chic treasure you may have lying around that appeals to the visual language of the coming generations.

The alternative, of course, is designing spaces, elements or experiences into your venue that are specifically intended to be *instagrammed*.





Create the opportunity...

One new venue that comes to mind is The Governor Hotel in Macquarie Park. It has a rooftop terrace that's separated from the main trading floor with a long internal staircase... long enough to dampen ones mood when moving between the two areas.

While the interiors of the hotel are Insta-worthy in themselves, we love the way they introduced a series of graffiti style artworks at the various levels of the staircase which are perfect for Insta-moments. A large scale cherry-red-lipped smile; a pair of cartoon muscled arms at shoulder height ready for a pose and post to Instagram.

This thinking perfectly demonstrates an appreciation for grabbing an opportunity. Now patrons leave with smiles and memories instead of what could have otherwise been a negative experience of a long staircase.

Providing a backdrop for beautiful pictures is often best paired with re-imagining signature menu items in a Willy-Wonker-esque fashion. We're certainly not suggesting style should trump substance - flavour and freshness in a dining experience is still essential.

However, some thoughtful presentation and styling should see your patrons snapping pictures. When added to their Instagram accounts these images can *beat of the drum* for your venue and attracting more customers organically.

The key approach...

The introduction of building elements, spaces or experiences that exude personality and spunk is a key approach to capturing the benefits of Instagram, and it's not necessarily a big-ticket solution!

- > An audacious mural on an underutilised wall
- > An intense pocket of planting
- > Oversize bold signage advertising your wares – maybe with a provocative message

Matched with the right lighting, these can be cost effective approaches to getting your venue Insta-friendly



So where to from here....

This overview barely scratches the surface, and we are already framing out the content for more pieces on this topic.

The key take-away is that marketing has traditionally been a process of spending big to try and get the message out.

The 'Instagram effect' now gives venue operators the opportunity to put those dollars back in the hands of the venue management to invest directly into your hospitality offer, building a quality experience and watching as members and guests share their memories and get the message out for you.

Social media is the new word of mouth, and a venue that has been carefully considered for *Instagram* can market itself with shares and likes.

At GROUPN we help hospitality venues attract more high-value customers by delivering inspiring and exciting spaces that will leave a lasting impression.

Not sure where to start?
Let's talk

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