

BUILDING CUSTOMER AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT FOR EVLOGIA CAFE THROUGH INSTAGRAM MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the authors' efforts in aiding Evlogia Cafe in Badung, Bali to gain new customers by increasing customer awareness, engagement, and number of followers on the Instagram account. Methods and activities carried out to reach those objectives include changing the username, bio, and story highlights of the business profile on Instagram, developing a schedule for feed posts and their individual captions, using hashtags, and creating challenges for customers. More followers, post interactions and reached accounts were the most noticeable results. It is expected that the improved social media presence builds customer awareness and engagement, which will ultimately benefit Evlogia Cafe in terms of business growth and reputation.

Keywords: digital marketing, hospitality business, Instagram engagement, online marketing, SME, social media marketing

1. Introduction

Evlogia Cafe is a small coffee shop that was opened in December 2021 in Dalung, North Kuta Subdistrict, Badung Regency, Bali. The business owners faced challenges, i.e., many seats in the cafe were usually empty and most customers were friends or relatives of the owner and employees. This project aims at improving the marketing of Evlogia Cafe.

This hospitality-based SME offered Indonesian meals like Nasi Goreng as well as western snacks like burgers and wraps. The drinks offered were a selection of sweet and colorful mocktails, coffee, tea and beer. Despite it being located in Jalan Raya Padang Luwih, at one of the busiest streets in Dalung, Kuta Utara, and about two kilometers from Dhyana Pura University, Evlogia Cafe and nearby a junior high school, the business had not gotten as many customers or as much engagement on Instagram as they would have liked to have. Therefore, the main objective of this project was to help Evlogia Cafe gain new customers and engagement by improving their social media presence and highlighting the Points of Parity (POP) and Points of Difference (POD), which had been shown to increase brand equity and engagement (Susanto, 2022a).

The Points of Parity (POP) of Evlogia Cafe were the simple and trendy menu and the target audience of teenagers and young adults. It was also important to benchmark against the closest competitors in order to have a more complete view of the competitive landscape (Susanto, 2022b). The nearest competitors by distance, size, and offerings such as Escape Cafe and Zodiac Coffee had similar menus and target markets. The Points of Difference of Evlogia Cafe were the cheaper and more affordable prices and the balcony view over the busy road, which created a more lively yet still enjoyable vibe.

This project was not only significant to the owner and manager of the establishment, but also to other coffee shops and small businesses that would like to experience economic growth and get new and loyal customers through the use of social media platforms. Social media marketing is increasing in prevalence because of its ubiquity, capability for personalization, and location feature using mobile devices (e.g., smartphones) (Susanto, 2022c). Previous projects have shown that carefully designed marketing strategy could be beneficial for SMEs (Kutschenreuter et al., 2020), including for digital marketing (Meisha et al., 2022) and social media marketing (Konstantopoulou et al., 2019). Social media marketing could also be a way for hospitality-based SMEs to survive and even thrive during the Covid-19 pandemic (Subawa et al., 2022), which hit the tourism island of Bali especially hard—in a two-year decline that could be considered as a “hard reset” (Susanto, 2022d).

One of the main problems faced by Evlogia Cafe was the lack of awareness outside of the friends and relatives network of the owner and employees. This means that Evlogia had not gotten many new customers and that the income strongly relied on friends and relatives supporting the business. Upon deeper analysis, part of the reason for this problem was another issue: their lackluster social media presence. Potential customers might perceive the Instagram account of Evlogia Cafe as disorganized, unaesthetic, and overall unwelcoming. There was no clear upload schedule and not a lot of variety when it came to posts and captions. The photos also did not seem to match with each other because of different editing styles. In addition, the fonts and capitalization of letters in the bio and story highlights were inconsistent and therefore unpleasant to read. This was contrary to the best practice of managed-contents on social media with consistency in posts, including the types of images used, typography, brand elements—while also pursuing variety in postings (Moran et al., 2019; Sabate et al., 2014).

Furthermore, there were too many story highlights that were unimportant to most customers. Netizens were not interested to watch all the stories and would likely lose interest quickly. What could also irritate customers are the different opening hours that are displayed on Google and Instagram. Due to budget limitations, Evlogia Cafe could not afford to use ads on Instagram or on other social media platforms. In short, the problem of Evlogia Cafe was that only a few people knew of this place and the lackluster use of social media is part of the reason for the lack of growth.

Instagram is an important tool for the growth of businesses, including SMEs (Konstantopoulou et al., 2019; Utari, 2021). Consequently, to make Evlogia Cafe known to more people, the objective of this project was to improve the social media presence and specifically to increase the number of reached accounts, followers and engagement on Instagram. Before the implementation of this project, the number of followers, likes, comments, saves, shares and other forms of interaction on Instagram were taken into account. Since the Instagram account of Evlogia is a business profile, Instagram Analytics was accessed to measure the progress of reaching this objective. This specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely objectives of increasing reached accounts, followers and engagement on Instagram were pursued without spending money on advertisement.

Proposed solutions to the problem of low Instagram engagement included regularly scheduled posts, the consistency of editing styles and fonts, unique and interesting captions with enough hashtags. In addition, the team also aided in making the bio, story highlights and overall account more welcoming and aesthetically pleasing. By doing that, engagement and customer awareness about Evlogia's products, services, challenges and other updates could be raised. All changes and improvements were explained to the staff at Evlogia Café in subsequent training sessions, so that these measures could be continued upon the completion of this project. To prevent any confusion for customers, differing opening hours on Instagram and Google were to be fixed.

2. Methods

The following activities were conducted by the team to gain more customers and increase the number of reached accounts, followers, and engagement. First, the differing opening times were corrected, so that Google and Instagram have displayed the same opening hours. The official name of the account was changed from "@evlogiacafe_" to "@evlogia_bali" to make clear that Evlogia Cafe is in Bali. The Instagram bio was shortened and updated to look more organized and to only include important details, such as the correct opening times, the location and the option to order on GoFood. Unimportant quotes and story highlights like "Lovely Cust" and "Grand Opening" were left out, so that Instagram users will see the most important information and highlights immediately. Differing fonts and the inconsistent capitalization of letters in the story highlights were removed and matching covers for the story highlights were added. Figure 1 indicated the changes made together by the community engagement team and the Evlogia manager.

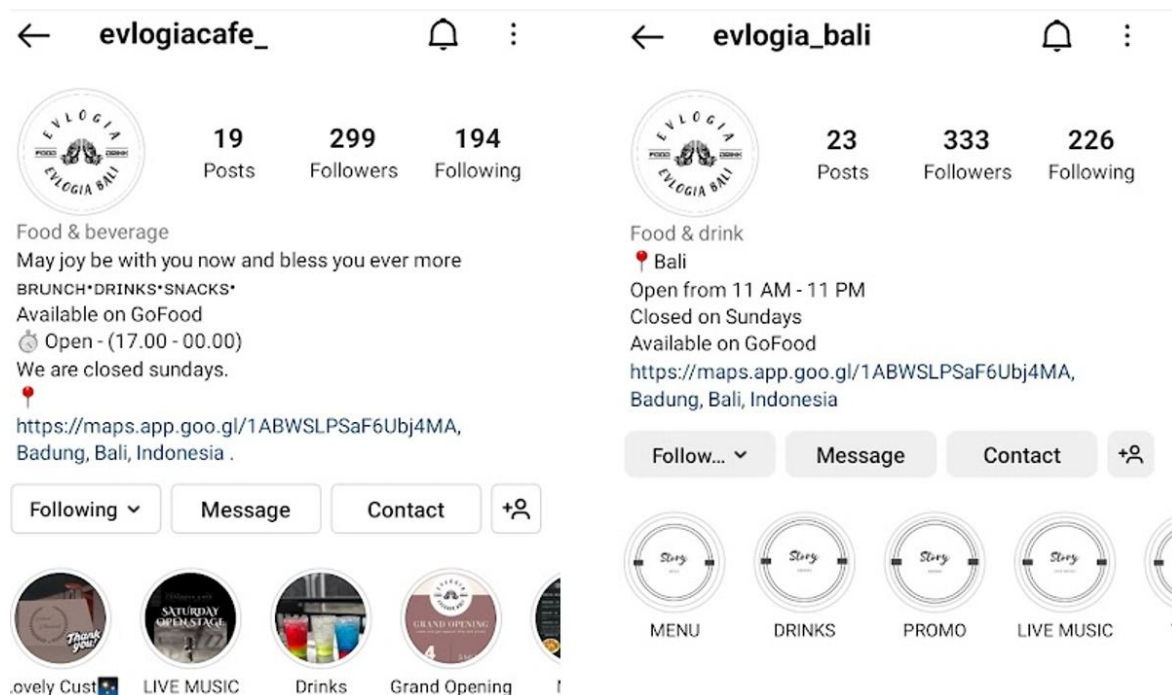


Figure 1. Before (left) and after (right) screenshot of the Instagram profile
Source: Instagram @evlogia_bali (2022)

Other activities included regularly scheduled posts. Previous studies have found that photo-based social media presence could be helpful in promoting restaurants (Chen, 2018; Salleh et al., 2015), which is why more photos were posted

on the Instagram feed. New photos were taken and edited in the same style and with the same filter, so that they all matched each other. The feed posts and corresponding captions have all been carefully planned. One to two photos were uploaded to the feed every day at 11am and/or 6pm. The posts at 6pm were often prioritized because most followers of the Evlogia Cafe Instagram profile were active at that time, each day of the week, according to Instagram Analytics. In addition to the varying photos, unique and inviting captions for each photo were one of the most important actions utilized to increase interactions on Instagram. Before the start of the project, Evlogia Cafe did not put a lot of effort into creating unique captions. Most captions consisted of the name of the food or the drink followed by the words "by Evlogia" and a few hashtags. In contrast, the captions for the new posts consisted of full but short sentences, more hashtags and often exclamation or question marks. These changes were then trained to the cafe manager and social media account manager to be implemented and continued sustainably.

3. Results and Discussion

This project introduced several changes in terms of digital marketing and social media management for Evlogia Cafe. The SME used to post similar content multiple times in a row. Since the beginning of this project, avoiding similar photos twice in a row has been a priority in order to keep the posts interesting and diverse. Now, the content of the photos varies between foods, drinks, challenges, people, decorations, and furniture (Figure 2).

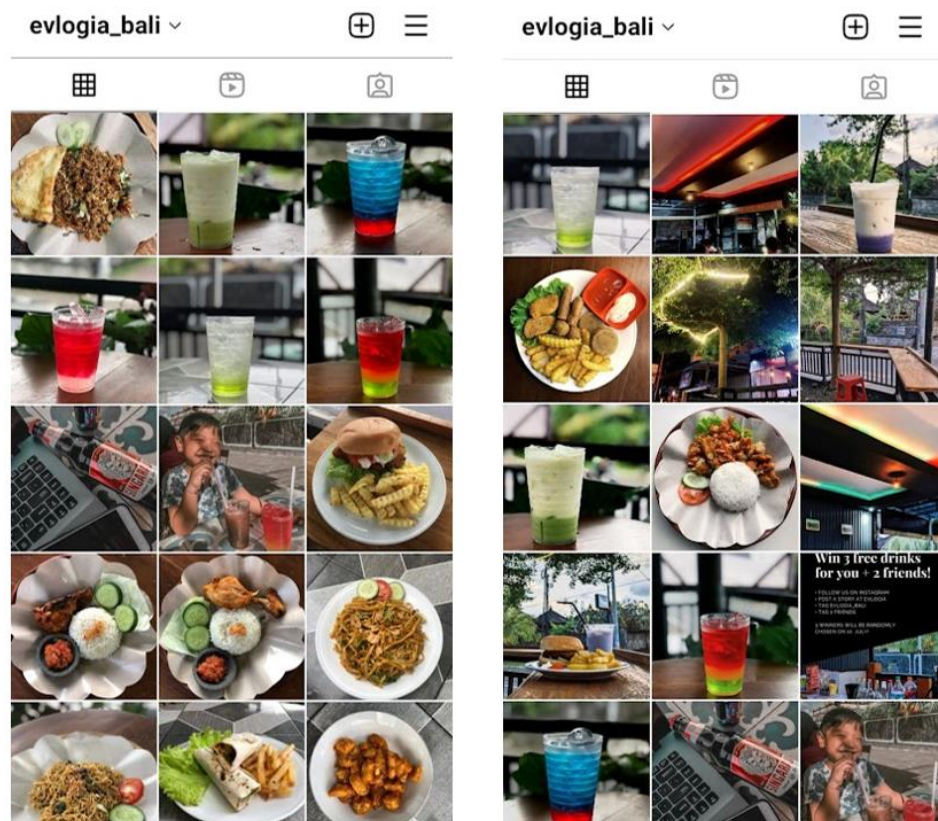


Figure 3. Before (left) and after (right) screenshot of the Instagram feed
Source: Instagram @evlogia_bali (2022)

Additionally, the captions for the new posts consisted of full but short sentences, more hashtags and often exclamation or question marks. The purpose of short sentences in the beginning of the captions were to catch attention. Some captions were puns such as "So little time, so matcha to do!" and rhymes like "Take a seat, grab a treat!". Questions like "Have you tried our *Ayam Geprek* yet?" were meant to make users think about the products at Evlogia Cafe. The Point of Difference of the balcony view over the busy road was highlighted with the caption "Enjoy the view on our balcony with a refreshing Taro Ice and the Burger Ayam". Other captions like "Sit back and relax after a long day at university or work" related to the age range of 18 to 24-year-old followers. According to Instagram Analytics, this age range makes up about 64.5% of all the Evlogia account followers. All captions ended with seven to fifteen hashtags to attract more non-followers. More hashtags were used compared to some older posts because hashtags can bring a higher visibility to the Instagram account (Apaolaza et al., 2021). Some photos that have already been posted were archived in order to re-upload them with new captions and hashtags.

The direct impacts of the new username, bio and story highlights might not be measurable, but the number of followers has been increasing ever since. Especially since the posting schedule was set and photos have been uploaded to the feed every day, the number of followers started to rise. Other results such as the increasing numbers in reached and engaged accounts as well as total followers can all be observed through Instagram Analytics, which showed insights as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Insights Overview for 6. July - 12. July 2022

	N	Growth in % compared to 29. June - 5. July 2022
Accounts reached	305	+74.2%
Profile visits	351	+158%
Accounts engaged	65	+3,150%
Total followers	333	+4%

Growth in % of total followers was compared to 5. July 2022 only

All numbers, including the reached and engaged accounts, profile visits, and followers have increased, with the greatest improvement was the growth of post interactions at 13,300% according to Instagram Analytics. Evlogia gained much more likes, comments, saves, and shares due to being consistent in posting at regular times each day and alternating between different types of photos.

Furthermore, the challenge that encouraged people to post a story while tagging @evlogia_bali and two friends to win some prizes also helped with the user engagement. In the beginning, the challenge was set to last one week. However, no one participated, which is why the challenge was extended for one more week. After that, three people participated. The post about the challenge itself has reached 164 accounts in total, has been shared ten times, and made two people follow the account right away [2]. Lessons learned from this challenge are that people are willing to participate or would consider participating if they are given enough time to do so.

Another action that played an important role in increasing post interactions were the captions for posts. Figure 4 illustrates an example of the significance of captions. Despite having used a slightly different filter for the photo, nothing else was changed except for the caption. Within four days, the post with the engaging caption and more hashtags received 22 likes, which is more than twice as much as the original post, published about three months ago in April. In comparison, the older post with the very short caption and three hashtags only has ten likes. Additionally, while the new post made ten accounts visit the profile of Evlogia Cafe, the number of profile visits from the original post is zero, according to Instagram Analytics. Similar to Figure 4, other photos like the one in Figure 4 have been slightly edited and reposted with new

captions, which gained almost twice as many likes. These results illustrate that captions make a great difference in post interactions.

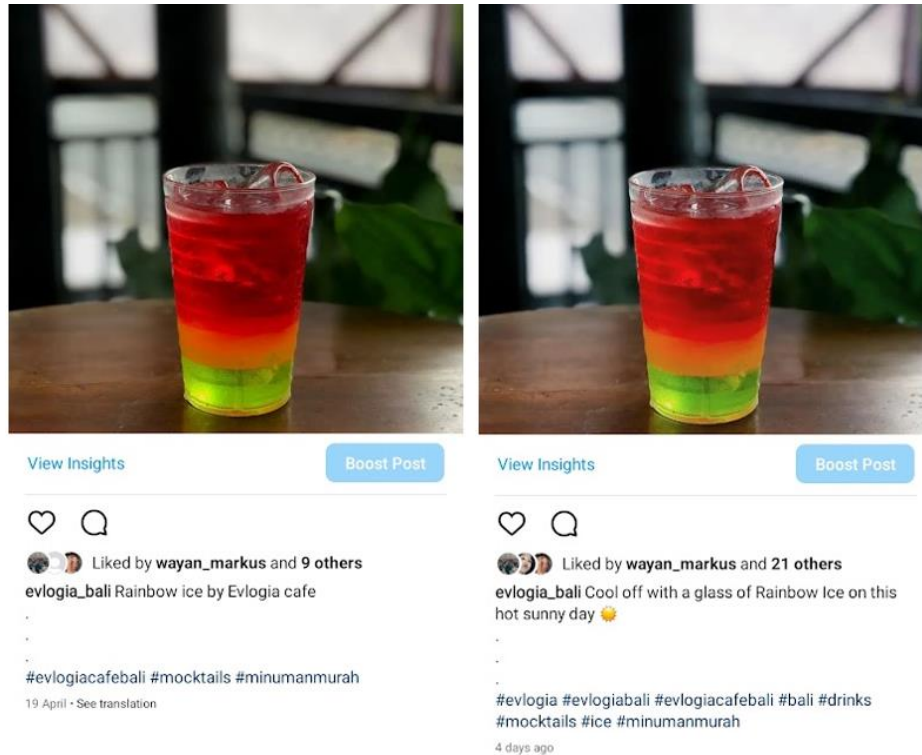


Figure 5. Before and after posts of the drink "Rainbow Ice" with different captions
Source: Instagram @evlogia_bali (2022)

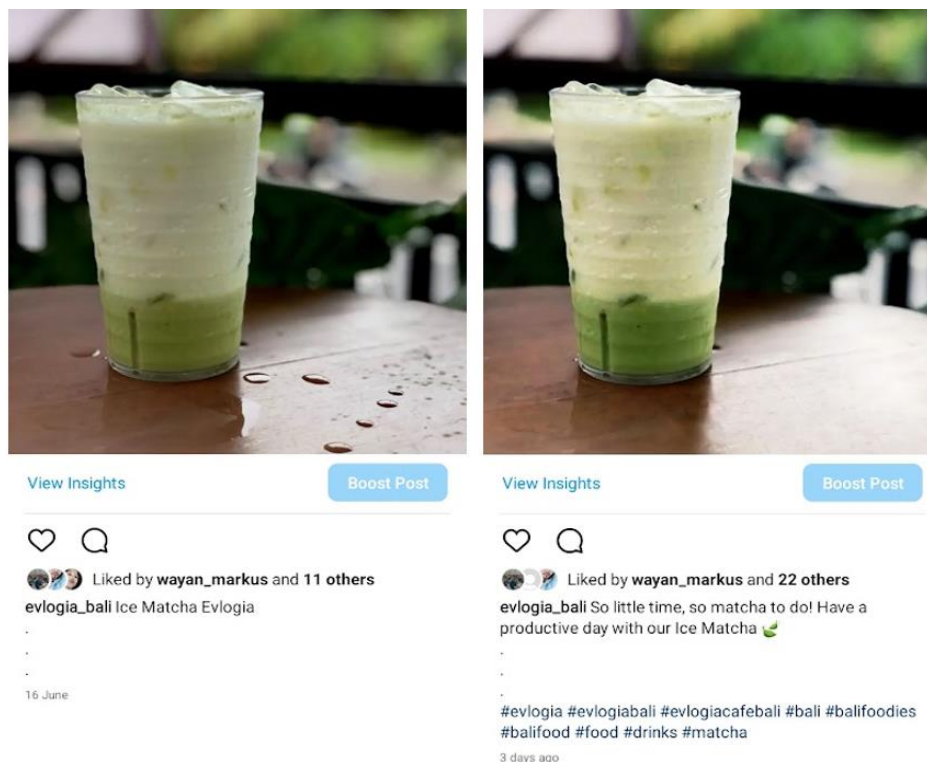


Figure 6. Before and after posts of the drink "Ice Matcha" with different captions
Source: Instagram @evlogia_bali (2022)

Regarding the keyword-based search on Instagram, the use of hashtags was increased so that non-followers were made aware of Evlogia Cafe. Photos were able to reach non-follower accounts through the use of hashtags. This means that hashtags in fact have an impact on the impressions, which can be defined as the number of times that a post appears on a user's screen. However, more impressions are linked to Evlogia's followers who first saw the post on their home feed or from the profile of Evlogia Café.

4. Conclusion

Through this project, the team accomplished the objectives of gaining more followers and increasing Instagram engagement, which will help Evlogia Cafe to gain more brand awareness and engagement. Creating a new schedule for feed posts, uploading photos of different things with the same aesthetic, fixing the bio and story highlights, and making creative captions while using hashtags were the most impactful methods of this project. The owner and employees of Evlogia Cafe can continue these simple but effective marketing techniques on Instagram to increase the customer awareness, engagement and ultimately the reputation and economic growth of the cafe. Other small business owners who want to attract more customers without spending money on advertisements can apply these methods on their own Instagram accounts.

The team would like to mention some other areas that Evlogia Cafe can improve outside of Instagram. Something that Evlogia Cafe could change is making their drinks look more appealing by using garnishment and glasses instead of plastic cups. To make the cafe more visible at night, more lights could be added to the entrance. Evlogia Cafe could also create new challenges that encourage customers to leave good reviews on Google. Selling their products on Gojek, GrabFood or ShopeeFood could also increase the number of customers in the future. In conclusion, there are still many things that can be improved at Evlogia Cafe. Nevertheless, the project methods that have been applied on Instagram already showed great results and a tremendous growth in a short period of time.

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