

THE MACHINE

HUMANISING CONTENT CREATION FOR HEALTH & EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS



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A NOTE FROM JOHN

When small business owners want to grow, they often think that they have a "lead" problem. That they don't have enough qualified leads to convert into clients, or members of their business.

When we humanise this though, and if we assume that the product or service itself is actually something of value, we see that while leads can be helpful, deep down, it's really a "communication problem."

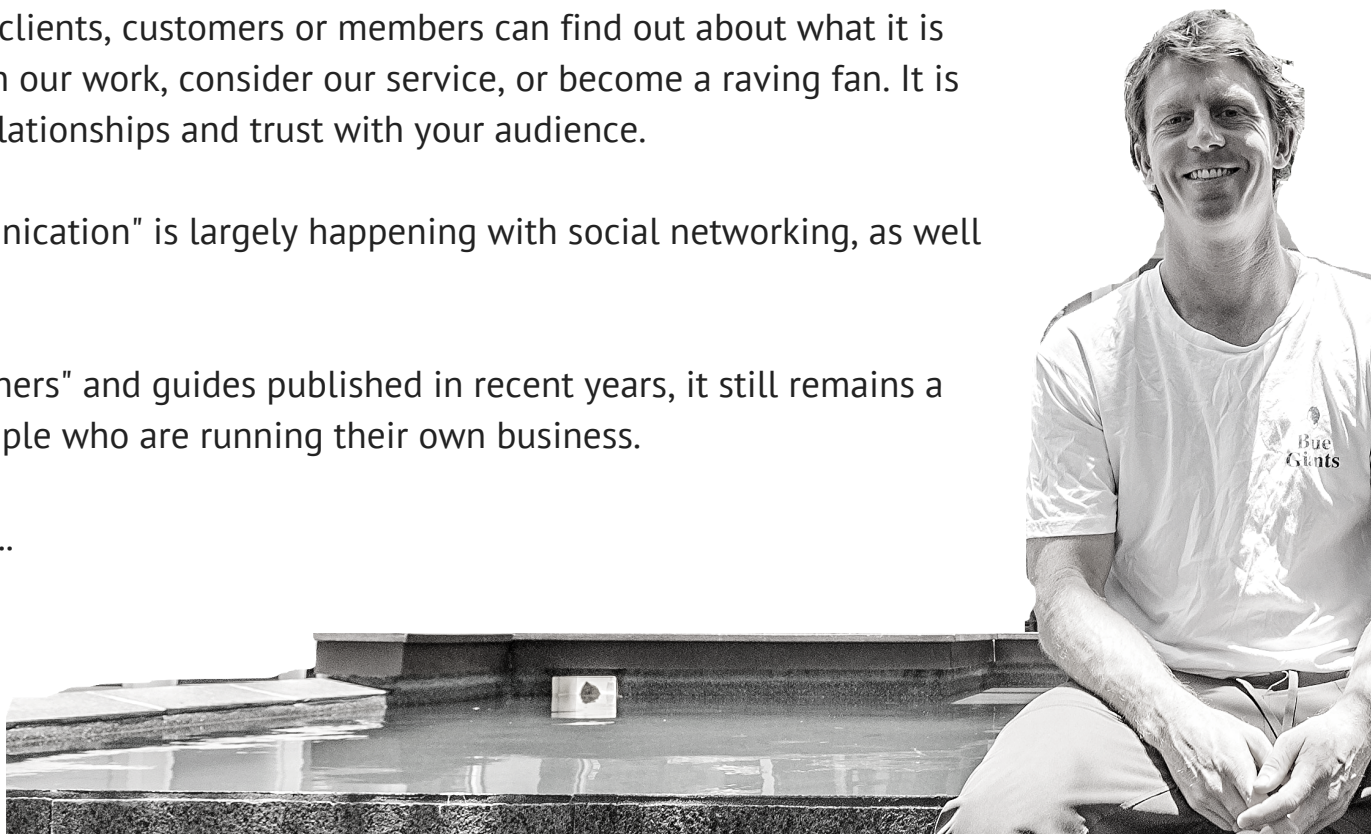
Communication of course happens within the business (and helps create culture) and outside of the business - which is our marketing.

Communication is the only way our potential clients, customers or members can find out about what it is that we do (awareness), become familiar with our work, consider our service, or become a raving fan. It is also the *only* way you can build meaningful relationships and trust with your audience.

In 2020, this "outside of the business communication" is largely happening with social networking, as well as offline word of mouth.

While there are countless "social media planners" and guides published in recent years, it still remains a complicated, confusing world for a lot of people who are running their own business.

Well, we are going to change that right here...



THE MACHINE - OWN YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

The Machine helps small business owners create a well-rounded and humanised approach to their content marketing and communication.

In a world of noise, confusion, teachers and coaches on every corner, The Machine outlines 6 specific ways of communicating (or "types" of content) that you can use to easily reach your audience, build trust and foster real relationships, which are the foundation of your business.

As a business owner, this means you can start to finally interact with your audience and build deeper levels of trust.

You can start to create, engage, listen and interact. This opens the door for you to do more of what works while not having to overthink, and finally STOP spending your time on things that just don't work.

When you know how to easily create content that brings value and creates trust with your audience, you finally have a link between the wants and needs of the people you want to serve, your marketing and your actual business.

You know your business better than anyone else, and The Machine will allow you to stop outsourcing to a VA or expensive Social Media agency that puts a few pictures up for you and promises that it'll eventually work.

The Machine teaches you to create, communicate and start to grow.

Happy creating and I hope you enjoy!

WHY YOU NEED TO START CREATING

In small biz, there are two main focus areas.

The first, of course, is to **master your craft or your service**. This is at the core of everything that you do. Do we need to be the absolute best? It is always nice, and something to work towards, but not essential to create a profitable business.

The second focus area is to both **connect with, and contribute to, our target audience**.

This connection is built on what we are calling "communication."

Your success is built on you being in good communication with the people you serve. Without this, to them, you don't even exist.

WHAT DO I MEAN BY "COMMUNICATION?"

Before we go any further, let's unpack what we are talking about here.

To communicate is "to convey a meaning from one person or group to another through a mutually understood sign, symbol or semiotic rule."

Sounds complicated. Basically, this "conveyance" needs to be expressed, and then of course received. So, in it's simplest form, an "experience" needs to take place that carries meaning.

The "experience" could be audio, video, written, or other! A big part of The Machine is helping you to create "experiences" that resonate with your audience to build attention and trust.

WE ALL NEED TRUST...

Every time you make a sale, you do so on the premise that you have earned "trust."

This is trust that you have built with your audience over time and is a requirement for the sales process to happen. The main way that we build trust is through connecting with our audience, and then "contributing" to them and the journey they're looking to make as well. **This "contribution" is also called "adding value."**

So, if you want me to buy from you, I need to firstly know you exist, then start to listen to you, understand you and eventually like and trust you. At this point, if I'm looking to make a purchase, it's likely you'll be the one I seek out.

This makes effective communication the most important skillset for small business owners alongside their craft.

You either have a plan for how to communicate your message and brand, or a competitor will.

WHY "THE MACHINE"

While it might seem like "communication" is a really natural skill or process, for most small businesses it's not something that comes easily straight away, in particular on online and social platforms. The Machine is simply a way of thinking - a tool kit to help you communicate more prolifically and naturally. It's like a set of training wheels to make sure that you're covering all of the key areas that are important.

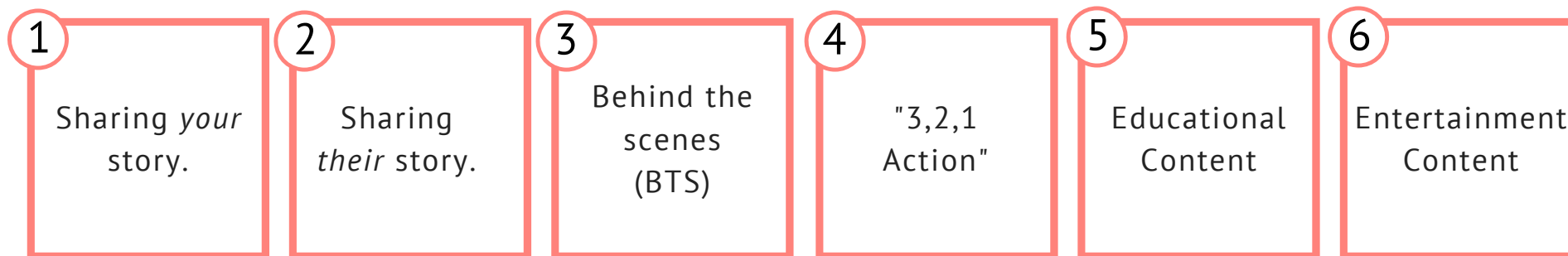
The goal is to learn to powerfully and easily communicate our message or brand and create value in order to connect with the people we seek to serve, and help us create change.

THE SIX MESSAGING TYPES

The Machine is built to help you learn to create content in a more human way. When we relate as humans on the daily, we don't "just teach" or "pose for the camera." We joke, we teach, we tell stories... And each type of communication has an intention behind it. The feeling our overall ability to communicate evokes in others creates our reputation or brand.

Now, in The Machine we are going to break this all down into six different types of messaging that is particularly suited to health and wellness businesses. Are there more than six? Of course! Think of this as a platform to build from.

While many businesses traditionally create "pretty picture" content or "look at me" images, here we are diving into content types to elevate attention and trust with our audience. For practitioners, coaches and owners, this is far more relevant than "look at my stuff" content. Here are the six types of content or communication:



LET'S GET STARTED...

In the following chapters we're going to break down how to execute each of the above easily and organically.

1. SHARING YOUR STORY

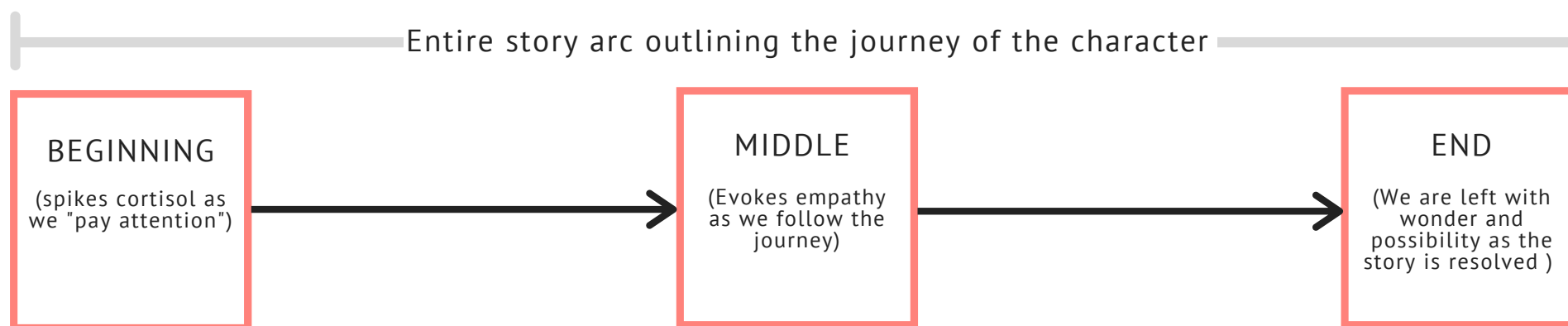
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ONCE YOU KNOW YOUR STORY, YOU NO LONGER ARE COMPETING

Storytelling is our first type of communication or content peice. This is because it's both powerful, *and* it can underline many of the other types of content. Storytelling has been our preferred method of communication for centuries, and it's a great way to communicate with your audience.

Storytelling is a way of uncovering a series of events that took place and involved a character, a challenge and an insight. When you start to share your story as an individual or a business, it builds trust with us as the audience and it also sets you apart: *nobody else can match your individual story.*

Storytelling involves three key emotional responses that take place in the brain:



"STATUS UPDATES"

"Status updates" also make great content. They are storytelling that is happening in the "now."

A status update could be a photo of an event, a meeting that just happened or some other current event. They update the audience on your overall "macro" story, as it unfolds over the months or year.

1. SHARING YOUR STORY

YOU NEED TO FOLLOW A STORY STRUCTURE, OR "ARC..."

Because storytelling actually changes the chemical responses in the brain, it is powerful for engagement!

The beginning must catch our attention. Without this, we scroll past.

We can create engagement in this part of the story in a number of ways: cues/signs that stand out, emotional cues or eye candy/visual cues. This needs to be something that stops us!

From here, we are looking to gain context around what is happening and unfolding. This might set the scene, the location, or some of the other details involved.

Each part of the story is designed to take us further along the journey, and ultimately to the ending or insight.

The basic story structure or story arc needs to be followed in storytelling - if we drift away from the story structure, viewers lose attention and engagement as it becomes difficult to continue watching.

You've probably felt this before - when a story seems to drag on or you find yourself scrolling past.



1. SHARING YOUR STORY

SOME STORY PROMPTS TO KICK THINGS OFF:

Here are some starter prompts that you can use to begin creating some storytelling content. Try these now, then explore and create your own.

Why do you do what you do?

How did you get started?

Why did you change something?

What challenges have you faced?

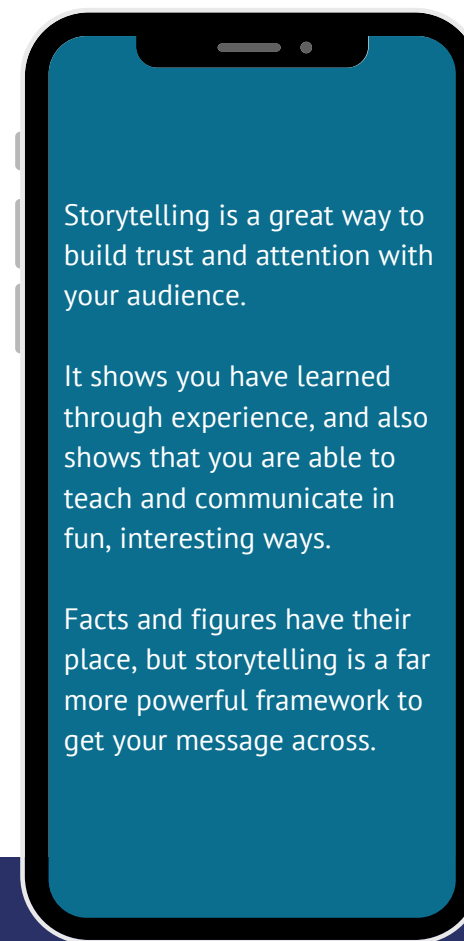
Tell us about an early mentor?

What was a recent success?

What was the biggest mistake that you made?

Show us a photo of when you were young?

Can you talk to us about your upbringing in a podcast?



FORMATS AND PLACEMENTS

Storytelling is great for any format - it could be in a video on a social media post, or, it could be in the caption. It also could be in a long form article or blog post that sits on your website.

Generally, the more engaging storytelling you can integrate into your copy and communication, the better.

2. SHARING *THEIR* STORY

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WHAT CAN YOU SHARE, OR WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THOSE AROUND YOU?

We can also share other stories or insights that we have seen, noticed or heard about along our journey.

These can be stories from your colleagues, your clients, or from a friend. What is something you've learned? What's an insight that you can share?

Not everything has to come from you. Share with us insights that came to you from the people you work with, as well as your mentors and teachers.

This is worth repeating - you can share stories you hear or pick up as ways of teaching or entertaining. You don't need to be the main character of the story.

These can be long, or, they can be shorter "snack" sized posts and are an engaging way to communicate with your audience.

FORMATS AND PLACEMENTS

Once again, these can be placed anywhere really - small stories or insights from your clients or colleagues could be in a video, in a blog post or shared in a podcast.

These types of content peices also can be perfect for "elevating" a client or member within a community facebook group, or on a bigger social platform.

3. BEHIND THE SCENES (BTS)

SHOW YOUR PROCESS: BUILD FAMILIARITY, HUMANISE YOUR BRAND, BUILD TRUST

BTS content is also sometimes called "contextual" content. When you think about it, this allows you to communicate "what's going on" beyond the day-to-day work that the audience might see.

BTS content can build familiarity, trust and resonance with your audience and can dramatically "humanise" your business.

While there are no hard and fast rules on what you could include in your BTS content, it's important to maintain brand and stay true to your boundaries.

What's happening now? Who is around you? What are you excited about? How do you create something that is part of your product or service?



FORMATS AND PLACEMENTS

While there are no hard and fast rules with BTS content, typically it's easiest to take advantage of short, impermanent formats - Facebook or Instagram stories are a great place to start for this.

As your audience starts to know you and like you more, they will usually be more and more interested in your BTS content - so, if you get stuck for ideas, reach out to your audience to ask them what they would enjoy to see more of.

4. "3, 2, 1, ACTION"

LET US SEE YOU IN ACTION: BUILD TRUST AND AUTHORITY

In the past, it was anyone's game: through simply creating content, you could build trust and authority.

Now though, as an audience, we want to see more. We want you to *show* us what you do and the change you make, rather than just *tell* us.

This is kind of like BTS content, except that here it's as if we're a fly on the wall and we're able to see you doing your work. This content is created "in house," and could be kicked off with some of the following prompts:

Maybe you are working with a client?

Maybe you are doing some prep work for a speech of class?

Maybe you are talking to other industry experts?



FORMATS AND PLACEMENTS

Action content can be educational, entertaining, or purely contextual - and this will influence where you host it.

For example, if it's a video of you teaching a concept to your peers, that could make great educational content that's a main post on a social platform. Alternatively, it could simply be some BTS content of you delivering your product or service that is shown on a disappearing medium such as Instagram stories.

5. EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

HELP US WITH THE TRANSFORMATION WE ARE LOOKING TO MAKE

Each client or customer you have works with you because they are looking for a transformation. "Education" is a key part of that transformation.

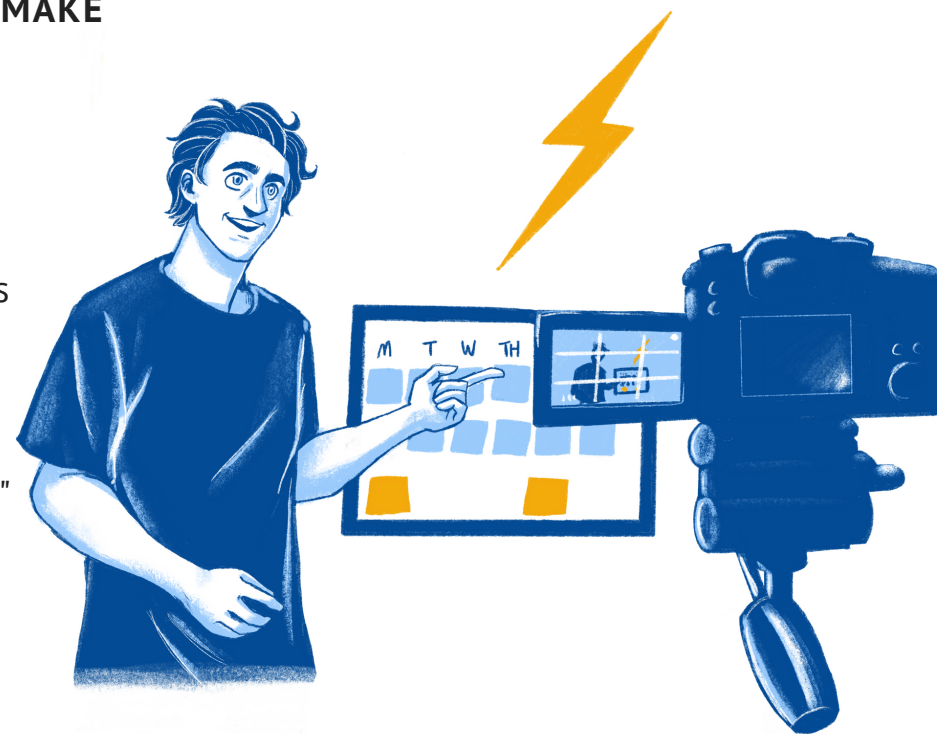
Social media platforms, your website or your blog can be great places to host short or long form educational content.

In service industries, this is the big one many seem to love. This includes tutorials, "how to" content, explanations and "tips and tricks" - This type of content is so common that we aren't going to go into too much detail here.

Can you think outside the box with how you deliver this?

Where does your client really want to be educated?

How can you make this interesting and fun?



FORMATS AND PLACEMENTS

Educational content can be hosted anywhere and is the most common type of content for a lot of coaches, trainers and practitioners.

Typically, short form educational content could be hosted on Instagram, LinkedIn (try carousels also!) or Facebook, and long form content could also be shared on a website, a blog, a podcast or YouTube.

6. ENTERTAINMENT CONTENT

HUMOUR AND ENTERTAINMENT IS THE HIGHEST FORM OF INTELLIGENCE!

Entertainment is playful, creative, contextual and often tells a story all in one.

This content brings a lightness to our day, humanises your work and sparks engagement. Interestingly, this can also build great trust! It can be funny, wild, or impressive! When you think about major brands such as Nike or Red Bull, almost *all* of their content has a high level of entertainment value.

There is no formula here, the main thing to remember is that when we're "tense," we're unable to play and bring creativity, so your ability to entertain will improve as you "loosen up" and practice your communication.

Tell a funny story

Share a meme

Entertainment posts make great content in all areas.



FORMATS AND PLACEMENTS

Humour and lightness can really go anywhere. It humanises your brand, builds trust and keeps engagement high. You can bring entertainment value into your educational posts, your BTS, your storytelling and more. It can go on any platform from Twitter to a long form podcast.

If you find that this is really hard to do personally, see if someone in the biz can help you out and contribute content for you.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

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PLANNING YOUR CONTENT CREATION AND COMMUNICATION

When we consider all of the different types of content, what we are really doing is "rounding out" our communication with the audience.

Storytelling, education, entertainment value and some behind the scenes... Now your audience not only knows more about your business, but also can start to trust it! While some businesses and brands might not want to flesh out all of these areas, for small businesses in the health and wellness space, the six types of content in The Machine are great bases to cover to build trust and attention with your audience.

Eventually, this more "humanised" type of content can become second nature to the owner or staff, but at the beginning, it can be very helpful to plan this out or schedule the different content.

This can feel a little strained at the start, but in time, we adapt and we notice that we now have a fairly organic way of communicating as a business.

The next page then is simply a sample of how a small business could plan out some of this content...

A NOTE ABOUT "PLANNING"

There is a big difference between "planning" and "doing." It's far better to have a rough plan and **do** all of it than have a perfect plan and nothing happening.

And remember, be flexible. Plans can change, and so can planners - if there's something that comes up that you'd love create, then it's likely the best thing to do.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

SAMPLE PLANNER - DAILY WEEKDAY POSTING

It's not essential to use a planner. The Machine outlines six types of content that can be created and used organically. However, for some people, a planner is very helpful. Here is one way you can set up three weeks of content:

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
WEEK 1	Sharing your story	"3,2,1, Action"	Educational Content	Behind the scenes	Entertainment Content
WEEK 2	Behind the scenes	Educational Content	Sharing your story	"3,2,1, Action"	Educational Content
WEEK 3	Entertainment Content	Storytelling Content "B"	Behind the scenes	Educational Content	"3,2,1, Action"

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

SAMPLE PLANNER - TWICE PER DAY, WEEKDAY POSTING

If you want to communicate more frequently, here is another outline that will help you create two content pieces in each day.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
WEEK 1					
(AM)	Sharing your story	Entertainment Content	Educational Content	"3,2,1, Action"	Entertainment Content
(PM)	"3,2,1, Action"	Educational Content	Behind the scenes	Entertainment Content	"3,2,1, Action"
WEEK 2					
(AM)	Educational Content	"3,2,1, Action"	Entertainment Content	Sharing your story	Entertainment Content
(PM)	Behind the scenes	Entertainment Content	"3,2,1, Action"	Behind the scenes	Educational Content

LISTENING - THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MACHINE

THIS STUFF IS A TWO-WAY STREET

In the first part of *The Machine*, we went through six types of communication that you can use to create content and connect with your audience.

But as we discussed in the earlier part of the book, communication has two sides: the transmission of the experience, and the *receiving* of the experience.

That's right, *The Machine* asks you to start listening as well.

What does that mean?

It means that even if you put out content every day of the week, if you don't interact, reply, respond, inquire and acknowledge other people's efforts to communicate, you won't go anywhere.

In this section we cover a few ways for you to make sure that you aren't the person at the dinner party that won't shut up and never listens to anyone else. Here's how:

SIDE NOTE: WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Start creating. Write a blog, film a short video clip, take a photo and start to spread your message. Engage in conversations with others. Communication is about listening, and expression. Start today and celebrate your wins as you move forward.

LISTENING - MAKE ENGAGEMENT A PRIORITY

Watching, noticing, reading, considering.

Every time you create a piece of engaging content using one of the six content types, allocate a little time (10-15 minutes minimum) to acknowledge and notice the work of others.

Now, this doesn't mean go as fast as you can and engaging in a "fake" manner, it means set aside some time to really appreciate their work, try to understand it, and then - provide engagement: comment, share it or bookmark it for later.

As humans, we crave to be seen and acknowledged and this is why The Machine isn't just focused on creating. This needs to be repeated - you have to engage with the work of others if you want engagement with your own work.

Here are six different ways you can look, listen and engage with the work of others:

- 1 Listen to their podcast & write them a note.
- 2 Ask them a question about their latest post.
- 3 Share a great insight they gave to your friends.
- 4 Comment on their work.
- 5 "Like" their posts that you enjoy.
- 6 Ask them for more of their insights in a certain area.

A NOTE ON AUTHENTICITY

Ultimately of course, you can't "systemise" either side of communication. However, using The Machine is a simple way to ensure that we are actually participating.

The Machine is a guide, yet as the owner, you need to take ownership of your own communication and content.

WHERE TO AND HOW LONG?

A SHORT NOTE ON LONG FORM...

Where do I post this content that I create?

How long should it be?

What's the best time to do it?

There are inevitably a number of questions that come up at this stage, and this is going to be normal. Why? Well, when you think of the concept of "communication," we know that there isn't any "one way."

There's no right answer and different formats, tones and lengths will work for different people: each of us needs to find our own voice.

However, one topic that I want to talk about is "long form" content.

In 2020, most people are focused on what is called "short form" content, including photos, short videos, and fast clips. And, while this is a great place to start and may make up the bulk of your communication, we know when everyone goes one way that quite often it helps to zag the other way....

Long form content on the other hand is now really anything longer than a few minutes, all the way up to 30 minutes or more. This type of content is usually hosted in written, audio, or video form (think eBook, podcast, or video) on your website. Long form content is an excellent way to build trust and authority as a business through entertainment or educational value as well as through powerful storytelling.

Long form content also has a longer "shelf life" and can be a relevant asset for a year or more.

WHERE TO AND HOW LONG?

A SHORT NOTE ON LONG FORM...

On this page then, we briefly outline a few opportunities to create long form content that can work as a "Pillar" piece of content for small businesses in the Health and Wellness or Fitness space.

These longer formats are typically used to go deeper, or to deliver valuable concepts that aren't so easily expressed in short form formats.

LONG FORM COMMUNICATION AND CONTENT IDEAS

- 1 Quarterly email newsletter breaking down key concepts.
- 2 eBook hosted on your site solving a burning problem for your niche.
- 3 Soft cover book that you publish to help educate your clients.
- 4 Long form video highlighting your story as a business or owner.
- 5 Video documentary on one of the concepts relevant to your business.
- 6 Podcast season with educational value around your area of business.

"CREATIVE BRAVERY"

In a world of same-same, as an audience, we seek something different. We are looking for people who are willing to push the boundaries on what is normal - we want to be moved, to be inspired... We seek creativity.

How can you push the boundaries of creative bravery in your communication and content?

WRAPPING IT UP

GETTING STARTED IS ALL THAT MATTERS

The Machine is a way of looking at the "why," the "how" and the "what" of a well-rounded, humanised communication and content strategy for small health and wellness businesses. It's a launch-pad for those who want to do more.

These businesses are typically run by a small team or an individual, so bringing in storytelling, entertainment and behind the scenes work *alongside* the more common educational content can be really powerful.

While some businesses will "outsource" their social media or content, I think it's far more powerful to learn this way of thinking and do the work yourself - it not only ends up being pretty fast and organic, but as the owner or staff, *you* are typically going to have far more insights into the wants and needs of your audience than any external consultant.

It's is up to *you* to create and foster great relationships with your audience, it's up to you to start communicating.

This isn't easy for a lot of people to begin with, and, at the same time following the concepts in The Machine doesn't mean your work will automatically be great, or that your business will automatically grow. What it does mean though is you can finally start to learn to communicate as a business. You can now develop a skill that will help you for years to come.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Start creating. Test things. Write a blog, film a short video clip, take a photo and start to spread your message. Engage in conversations with others. Communication is about listening, and expression. Start today and celebrate your wins as you move forward.

24 PARTING THOUGHTS

1. Focus on what your audience sees as valuable, not what you think is valuable (they'll tell you if you listen...)
2. Always be testing new things.
3. Always be tagging and mentioning in your content.
4. Always be writing - jot down thoughts on a notebook or phone for later use.
5. Don't be boring - try new things! If they don't work, so what? You learn. If they do, great.
6. Elevate your audience.
7. Show don't tell - use video and other platforms to highlight changes vs. tell us about them.
8. Volume will often win over quality, as quality will come through the practice, and volume means more practice.
9. Use the features (like instagram carousels) - platforms introduce features to be used.
10. It's not the gear. Flashy gear looks cool, but isn't needed to do great work.
11. Notice your natural strengths - lean into them, and cover your holes.
12. Collaborate with others. This helps you build interesting content and also increases your audience size.
13. Look for cultural relevance (pop culture, current events)
14. Create a pillar piece of content each year (this eBook you're reading could be a pillar piece...)
15. Give it away - don't charge for your base level work or ideas. Give it away. Charge for your main/premium offering.
16. Hire for impact. Do most things in house, and hire for long form content or big jobs.
17. Create events AND content - blend the two: live events with online content creation around the events.
18. Use Q&A -ask questions in your work - the audience is giving you insights around what they want to hear.
19. Don't worry so much about small metrics such as "likes" - look for engagement, feedback and more.
20. Consider linkedIn and other platforms that have less usage historically, but may be growing.
21. Create for your future, not just for now - creating conversations around your interests can pay dividends in the future
22. Humanise where possible - storytelling, showing emotion, vulnerability are all great.
23. Express gratitude
24. Focus on "momentum" - consistent profile views, site visits, engagement.

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