

SideHustle

celebrating the small business community



The Flower Edition

Editor's Note

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Dear Reader,

I would like to give you a warm welcome to the very first issue of Side Hustle, an inspirational lifestyle magazine dedicated to celebrating the creative small business community.

This magazine is designed for those of you looking to build a Side Hustle, whilst juggling your everyday life. We offer you a place of sanctuary, creativity, and passion.

We want to hear, share and learn about the talented geniuses behind every small business. Encouragement and support are at the very heart of our magazine, as we explore the highs and lows of becoming a crafting expert.

Side Hustle is easy to navigate, and split into four colour coded sections: Interviews (pink), Business Tips (blue), Crafting (purple), and Lifestyle (green). We strive to offer insight into every aspect of running a Side Hustle and love to explore the businesses and skill behind your products.

Each magazine is focused on different small business themes and this issue is all things floral! You will find interview features getting to know the small business owners behind Les Fleurs de Poppy, Hester Ruth Designs, Forget Me Not Nature, and more! We will be offering top tips on keeping originality in your small business, and also be delving into the need-to-know facts on using resin safely!

We understand the hard work that goes into each and every one of your Side Hustles, and we hope that you will join us in celebrating this!

So please, delve in and enjoy. We hope that you find these Side Hustles as inspiring as we do.

Love,

Your Fellow Side Hustler

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Meet Les Fleurs de Poppy...

Small businesses have always been an integral part to the success of the economy: the jobs that they can provide, and the custom they deliver. In the last year, small businesses have skyrocketed, mainly due to the pandemic.

By James Grossey

The small business owner

Poppy Evans is the owner and sole worker at “Les Fleurs de Poppy.” A business that she started in October 2020. On her Facebook page, it states “I make handmade resin earrings out of real flowers. I have always loved flowers and love the idea of using real ones to make jewellery.”

Precise and direct is Poppy’s charm, there are no smoking mirrors or illusions: you get exactly what you pay for. Rustic and authentic floral earrings made out of real flowers.

The origin story

Poppy admits that she has always been a fanatic for flowers. The French theme has stemmed from always loving the language and wanting to own a flower shop called “The Flowers of Poppy”, or “Les Fleurs de Poppy” in French.

This small business was inspired by a market stall in Malta that was selling earrings made out of real petals. Poppy was “bemused” by the trinkets that this stall sold and bought two pairs immediately.

She explained that the nationwide lockdown was when she first started exploring what she had witnessed in Malta, pressing flowers and fashioning them into these unique and distinctively designed earrings.

Words of Advice...

“Start a business for the love of doing it. I started mine because I love flowers, the process of making and the happiness people expressed when they bought my earrings. It also really helped my mental health, it gives me a great creative and positive outlet. Do it for your yourself and your wellbeing, not just to make money.”



Rose Petal Earrings, designed and created by Les Fleurs de Poppy.

The leap of faith

Poppy first started selling her flower earrings to her close friends, and when she heard their raving reviews and encouraging feedback, she decided to pursue her side hustle further.

Les Fleurs de Poppy is mainly advertised on a business Instagram page, which isn’t surprising in the least. Instagram is the perfect social media platform to voice your business and your product, and it is easy to gather a decent following when advertising a product as genuine as Poppy’s. She also advertises her merchandise on TikTok and Facebook too.

Poppy wasn’t sure at first if she was going to start a small business, as she found the whole concept a bit “scary.” She was nervous about whether customers were going to like her product, a product she had worked hard to design and create.

However, Poppy’s business prevailed; her flower earrings were so popular that she has now found other ways to be creative too. She also makes and sells bookmarks and phone cases, alongside her earrings. These products are designed with nature in mind, letting the beauty of the flowers speak for themselves.

The environment

Poppy insists on making her business as sustainable as possible through eco-friendly packaging and re-using recycled materials. The only slight concern is the resin. Resin’s toxins are damaging to the environment, as it is a plastic. However, Poppy stated that she uses the most eco-friendly resin that she can find. Les Fleurs de Poppy is a small business, so the global impact that her resin toxins have pale in comparison to giant corporations that don’t bat an eye at how greatly production damages the environment.



The Gypsophila Collection, available on Les Fleurs de Poppy’s Etsy.

Handmade by Les Fleurs de Poppy



Follow on Instagram, Etsy, TikTok and
Facebook: @lesfleurdepopp



Wavy Sea Lavender disco earrings: £8



Gypsophila oval-style: £8



Golden Lungworts: £13



The Forget Me Not Collection: Prices vary



Floral Bookmarks: £10 each



Cherry Blossoms: £12



Buttercups: £15



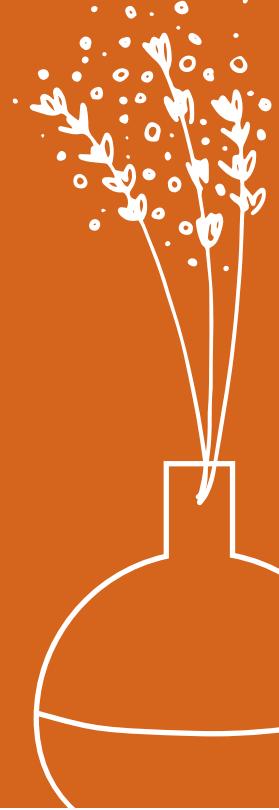
Daisy-style: £15

All prices include postage and packaging

SHOP ETSY. FIND JOY



Etsy



Beating the Instagram Algorithms

Promoting a business is hard enough, but using social media to keep up a following at the same time? Here is what you need to know.

By Sarah Ryan

The small business industry is starting to thrive and take over the world by being recognised for how revolutionary it is. It allows people to start up their own and sell the products that they are proud of, whilst also supporting others and aiding them in earning an extra income.

Benefits of using Instagram:

Running a small business can also be tough, as customers expect them to keep up with the 'new world' and have unique ideas that they have never seen before. This is why a social media following is important, especially on platforms, such as Instagram.

Instagram is a great platform to promote a business, using the 'Instagram Algorithm' to help recommend the best and most relevant content to its users every time their feed updates. It also studies past interactions with other users to see which accounts are being engaged with the most, making sure that they are gaining the highest attention.

To help beat the algorithm, there are some tips that you

should follow to make sure you succeed with your promotions.

How to keep up your following:

Finding your frequency is very important. It is preferred that you set a specific time for when you post so that everything is spaced out perfectly, whilst also maintaining a balance and allowing your followers to breathe from seeing your material.

There is no harm in opening up and letting your followers get to know you! Your audience will want to know who they are supporting, so allow them to know your interests, age, gender and maybe even your nationality.

It will also build a strong rapport with them so that they keep on supporting you and your business, some leaving positive reviews that hold the power to influence the next consumer's decision. Following on from this, it is important to chat to them and make sure they feel welcomed by you, as you want to give off a good impression whilst also allowing them to understand your business and the values you believe in.

This could encourage them into buying more of your products in the future, maybe even recommend you to their friends!

It is okay to make jokes about current situations, as it acts as a good way of getting yourself reposted, it is what gives your side hustle a human voice. This gives new users a chance to see your content or products and follow you, whilst also giving you the opportunity to reach a new audience.

With making jokes, just be careful about the tone or type of humour you use, as in some cases it could cross a line and offend people. For example, try to avoid topics surrounding race or sexuality as that could result with you going viral for the wrong reasons.

Always remember to use hashtags, as it makes it easier for people to find your photos when they are searching for specific terms. By posting interesting and engaging photos with hashtags, e.g. #SmallBusiness or #InstagramShop, it opens up your audience and allows them to go 'viral,' meaning that you get more public interaction. This potentially could allow your business to boom if you select the best tags!

Professional dashboard:

Be sure that you use the 'Professional Dashboard' feature on Instagram, as it was



Keeping the Instagram algorithms happy can be crucial in sustaining your small business.

What is the Instagram algorithm?

Instagram placed the algorithm in 2016, because "people used to miss 70% of the posts, and 50% of their friends' posts" which wasn't fair for the users. It analyses your past behaviour, goes over all of the available content and then evaluates it to predict how interesting it is, specifically for you.

Every single time someone logs into their account, the algorithm figures out what order to place the posts on the newsfeed, which posts are featured on the 'Explore' tab and in which order the stories, reels, live videos and IGTV videos are shown.

created to help businesses thrive, offering insights into optimising their page. It works through tracking your performance through trends, accessing tools to help you build your business and checking your monetisation status, making sure you're eligible and alongside keeping you informed so that you learn how to make the most of Instagram.

With all this helpful and insightful information in mind, be sure that your Instagram is a comfortable and happy place for you and your followers, where you can advertise your products whilst also getting to know your customers on a personal level.

Committing To Sustainability

A guide to running, creating, and upkeeping your sustainable small business with packaging tips and the benefits of being environmentally friendly.

By Lucie Baxter

We all want to do our part for the environment and, for a lot of us, we do it through shopping. One of the attractions to small businesses rather than big, well-known companies is their sustainability. Knowing your money is going to support a student or feed a family feels so much better than feeding into an already enormous business.

Furthermore, buying online from large corporations often means unnecessary packaging, lots of plastic and plenty of carbon emissions. The products themselves are often made with cheap, non-recyclable materials that end up in a land-fill. Production on a large scale tends to be unethical and distribution is unsustainable. Now, with the conversations of climate change and sustainability more prevalent than ever, more and more of us are moving towards small businesses to feel just a little more environmentally friendly. Small businesses are known for being environmentally conscious, so we should use this selling point and make our businesses more sustainable.

Packing For The Future

According to a study by Survey Monkey, 1 in 3 participants preferred more environmentally friendly options when shopping online. An easy way of bringing this into your business is through more sustainable packaging. Packaging is extremely important because it is the first impression consumers get of you and they often judge accordingly. Showing your consumers the values you hold is something that should definitely be present in every aspect of the business.

Instead of using plastic, there are many biodegradable or recyclable options out there. Cardboard boxes are around 80% biodegradable, making them ethical and sustainable. You could invest in custom boxes, which fit the size of your



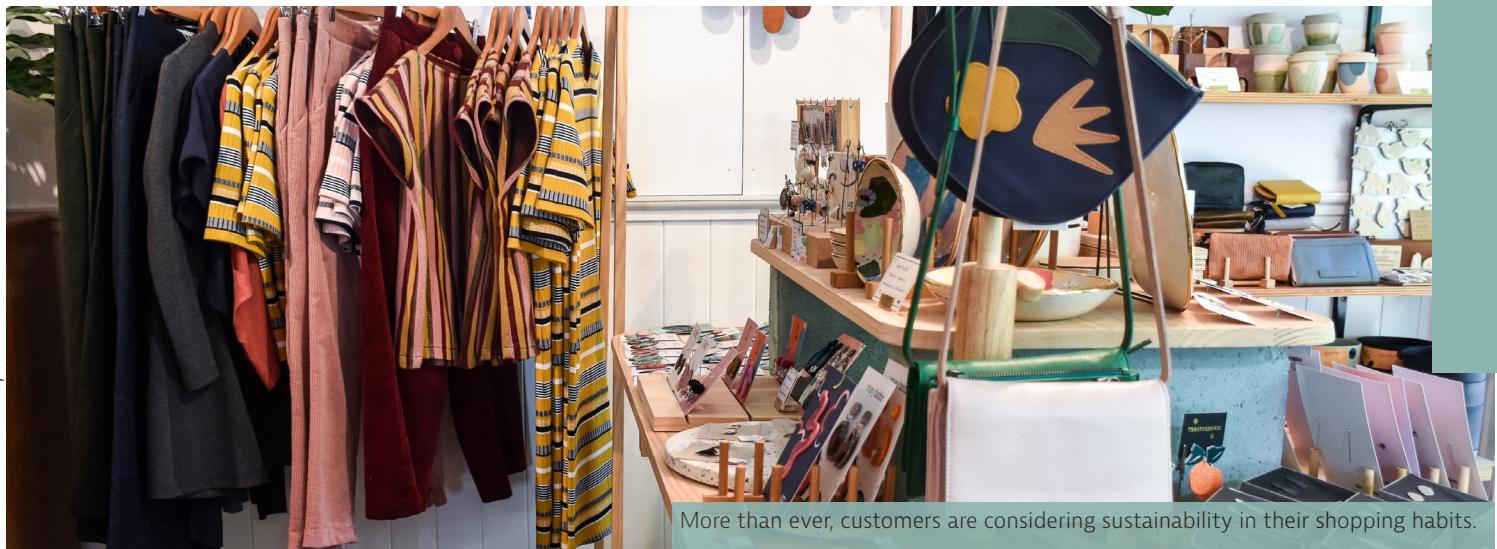
By supporting a small business, you are supporting a real person's dream.

products, to ensure no materials are wasted. There is a plant-based packaging available, which is made from hemp hurds and mycelium. It decomposes in any environment you put it in. When packaging fragile items, you could use corrugated bubble wrap, which is made from upcycled cardboard, or biodegradable packing peanuts. What we're trying to do here is show, not just tell. With so many environmentally friendly alternatives at reasonable prices, making the change couldn't be easier. You can buy 15 cubic feet of biodegradable packing peanuts, for example, for around £30.

By making sustainability an essential aspect of your brand, your product becomes part of the competition! Advertise how your products and packaging are helping the environment so customers know what you're all about. Making a statement on your social media or website is a great way of telling your audience why they should buy from you.

Mushroom Packaging

By giving agricultural waste new life, mushroom packaging is 100% recyclable, biodegradable and sustainable. Even IKEA uses this packaging alternative.



© Socialcut / Unsplash

More than ever, customers are considering sustainability in their shopping habits.

For the bigger companies, going environmentally friendly is a campaign to gain the public's favour. Many consumers know that this is just a stunt and that the business doesn't care about the environment, making them less likely to invest. Clothing company H&M, for instance, created 'Conscious H&M', which they claimed was their way of creating sustainable style. However, when asked to prove how this clothing line was actually sustainable, H&M wouldn't provide the reasoning. Without this information, they were called out for 'misleading customers'. This resulted in many sustainable shoppers feeling as though they'd been caught in a marketing scheme, so they boycotted the fast-fashion giant. Clothing brand Zara are also guilty of having vague sustainability targets.

What Makes A Product Sustainable?

It isn't just how you package your products and where you sell them that matters, though. The products themselves are just as important. A sustainable product means it is made from renewable resources, recycled materials, and was manufactured ethically. There are many ways you could make small changes in your work process. If you work with resin for example, research 'eco-resins' and see if they could work for you. Eco-resin costs around £25 per kilo, which isn't more expensive than a kilo of regular resin. This all helps with ethical production since you're minimising environmental impact. Suppliers are also an important thing to consider, so try and choose someone local rather than a large company. There is less transportation, which reduces their carbon miles. When choosing the right ones for you, analyse their stance on sustainability, whether they support their local communities and where they source all of their materials from.

Turning The Internet Green

Websites like Etsy and Depop are great for selling products as they encourage customers to buy more ethical products. On Etsy, products are handmade, which makes it a perfect place to shop sustainably. Depop, traditionally for second-hand shopping, works like Etsy. The online marketplace promises 'fashion for a better future'. Many small business owners sell their products through Depop, including handmade jewellery and reworked or handmade clothes. An Optimizely report showed that 62% of online buyers shop at least once per month. If you already have an online business, you know this means a lot of competition. By marketing your business as sustainable, it draws in customers who are more than likely searching for something environmentally friendly.

The Environmental Cause

With a huge global shift in the fight against climate change, environmentally friendly options are only going to become more relevant in the industry. The world is already becoming more conscious with the constant development of how much damage we are doing. Studies continue to publish new and scary statistics about climate change. According to Earth Day, for example, "the worst impacts of climate change could be irreversible by 2030". Having a small business allows both yourself and your consumers to contribute to this sustainable lifestyle. Becoming sustainable doesn't have to be daunting. There are no guidelines to how to achieve an environmentally friendly brand and it's okay to start small. Now is the best time to get ahead of your competition by trying the many inexpensive ways to change your business for the better. Small businesses can make a big impact.

The Risks of Resin

From jewellery, to woodwork, to ornaments, there seems to be no limit to the creativity resin encourages. But how safe is this toxic substance and what can we do to protect ourselves from its risks?

by Poppy Evans

As we have all stayed at home in the last year and looked towards crafty creations to fill our spare time, there has been a rise in resin usage across the UK.

Personally, I turned to creating resin products using pressed flowers. Starting a small business using this crafting technique has completely changed my life for the better. However, in October (five months after I began using it), I fell victim to the dangers of resin.

Epoxy resin contains complex chemical compounds, which if not handled correctly, can cause some very adverse and painful reactions. Mine began with swollen, red, and sore eyes and spread to having swollen, itchy and blistering hands.

I was surprised by the lack of conversation on the dangers of using resin. I feel it is important to delve into the dangers surrounding this issue and look at ways that we can protect ourselves from the risks of resin.

What are the most common risks?

Contact dermatitis:

Contact dermatitis is the most common reaction to resin, causing inflammation and blistering to the skin. This can cause severe and painful discomfort but will usually go away once your skin stops coming into contact with the irritant.

If there is repeated contact with the skin, it can develop into chronic contact dermatitis. The symptoms may be slightly milder, but they will last for much longer. If the contact dermatitis is left untreated then it may cause eczema, which is incurable.



© Sylvia Kremer / iStock

This is what my eye looked like when I was suffering from my reaction to resin.

Allergic dermatitis:

A less common reaction to resin is allergic dermatitis: this occurs when a body overreacts to an allergen. Contracting this depends on your immune system and how frequently you are exposed to resin. You may be more susceptible if you have fair skin, been exposed to similar toxic substances, have other allergies (e.g. hay fever), or if you are under stress.

After exposure to resin, it could take any amount of time for this type

of dermatitis to kick in. To avoid developing the condition years down the line, it is best to take all possible safety precautions whilst using this harmful substance.

These allergic reactions can cause both skin and respiratory problems, however irritated skin is much more common out of the two. Skin irritations usually begin with swelling, itching and redness around the eyes.

Respiratory irritation:

Breathing in resin, especially if done frequently or for long periods of time, can affect the nose, lungs, and throat. Continuous inhalation of these chemicals can result in sensitisation, or even asthma!

It is important to ensure that you do not breathe in any of the sanding dust of resin. It is also crucial that you do not sand resin until it has fully cured, as the epoxy chemicals may be still active, leading to serious health problems.

Inhaling dust can result in particles getting trapped in the mucous lining of your respiratory system.

What precautions should I be taking?

As you can see from the risks above, it is most crucial to protect your skin, eyes and respiratory system whilst using resin.

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Gloves:

Nitrile gloves are recommended for safety as they're a thicker than latex gloves and therefore offer more protection. I wear Marigold gloves whilst resining, as I find the nitrile gloves are a too thin and so using a sticky substance can be very fiddly.

When buying resin, there will usually be a pair of nitrile gloves included in the box. If not, then Resin Obsession sell high-quality resin products, including gloves. Alternatively, I buy Marigold gloves from a supermarket.

If you do get any resin on your skin, you must wash it off as soon as possible. You can just use hand soap to do this, but some find using an exfoliant more effective.

One ingenious idea I came across was to keep a bowl of poppyseeds by the sink and add a pinch of them whilst washing your hands with soap, enabling them to act as an exfoliant.

Goggles:

To protect your eyes whilst resining, please do wear some safety goggles. As you can see above, eyes are very often affected by resin, so it is important to take the necessary precautions to protect them.

Any kind of safety goggles will be appropriate for using with resin. RS Components UK's online store offer a range of goggles for a range of low prices.

Mask / respirator:

And finally, protecting your respiratory system. There is no need to explain how important it is to do this.

It is recommended to always do your resin crafting in a well-ventilated room. Ideally, you should also wear a mask or ventilator whilst resining, especially if you are using large amounts of it and using heat on it at all. The fumes from heated resin are super toxic!



Being the Best

Side Hustle has broken down what we'd call key insights for broadening your small business ventures; because you definitely won't be alone in thinking that your idea is different from everyone else's. Whether that's colour range or customer services, we all have a different means to an end. The reality is, with 7.1 billion people on the planet, you might want to turn your idea into something a little more niche.

By Leila Card

What makes you special?

The key here is knowing why your product needs to be shared with the world! Knowing exactly what kind of customer you want to sell to and why this enables you to make the ideal customer archetype.

Work smarter, not harder: curate a product for your already existing customers (even if it's just one for now) before increasing your brand's influence sphere even more.

Every successful side hustle has a message behind it. From donating a percentage of profit to charity, to reducing carbon footprint, to something as simple as bringing a smile to your customer's face as they open your package.

Think about your business and how you may be able to incorporate your own brand identity.

How will people remember your services?

Who hasn't ordered food from a restaurant with terrible service and vowed never to go there again?

© Saeed / Unsplash

Similarly, who would want to buy from an online shop if they knew that they were going to receive terrible customer service?

It's not just about the product itself, but the whole brand associated with it. This may come in the form of how you deliver your products to your customers, how you communicate with your customers, or how easy it is for them to order your products online.

A good way to look at this is to focus on a company like Marks and Spencers. You are almost guaranteed the same service regardless of what store you visit: their prices stay the same, the products are all of the same quality and each staff member serves their customers with the same high standard of service.

Why should they buy your product over another?

Don't overlook the small stuff! Product differentiation is generally where the majority of our consumer marketers, or what's known as B2B marketers (business to business), are going to invest their time and money.

Unfortunately, in Western society today, almost any product can be copied in some form or another. It soon becomes competition for your brand within weeks.

Therefore, finding a niche and bespoke personality within your business is just as important as how your product looks or how well it works.

Competition

First of all, healthy competition is good! Instead of rivalry with another slightly similar product, establishing where your product can do better is potentially the difference between selling 3 wax melts or 30!

Reward your customers' loyalty! If your business / product has an already established social media presence, how about hosting a giveaway competition?

This could be to celebrate a follower goal (i.e. gaining 250 followers) to promote your products, or you could even start a collaboration with other small businesses and raise some money for charity!

What's more, is that a giveaway will encourage new attention to your business as well as ensure your current customers are returning ones.

Remember support and encouragement are instrumental within the small business community. We all know how hard it is running a side hustle, and it's important that we support others too. Staying original within your small business and trying your hardest not to take ideas from others is one of the best ways to practice this support!

How's your reputation?

In an online world, reviews mean everything. Encourage your loyal customers to leave honest, genuine reviews and you can turn this into feedback. If they can include pictures of your products too, then that's even better!

For example, a review could be left stating that a customer had issues with receiving their parcel, but upon reaching out and experiencing a positive email correspondence with the owner, they will be buying from the same store again. It's important to try and see any review left as a positive!

Hone it and own it

With dedication and commitment, you could potentially work your little business idea worm into a fully original, one-of-a-kind product!

Remember, finding your feet as a brand / company /Instagram shop takes time, so be kind to yourself and team, whether that's just you or a group.



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