Picture Perfect!

How to Attract & Engage Your Virtual Audience with Visual Content

Tim Dodd

Disclaimer

This short report has been written for information purposes only. Every effort has been made to ensure that it is as complete and accurate as possible. However, it is possible there may be mistakes in typography or content. The report will only provide information that is correct as at the stated date of publication and, therefore, should always be used as a guide - not as the ultimate source.

The main purpose of this short report is to educate. The author and the publisher do not warrant that the information contained herein is complete and shall not be held responsible for errors or omissions.

The author and publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by this publication.

First published in Great Britain in 2019
Tim Dodd - 3d Consulting Services
www.3dConsultingServices.com
help@3dconsultingservices.com

Created by 3d Consulting Services

Picture Perfect

How to Attract & Engage Your Virtual Audience with Visual Content

Tim Dodd

3d Consulting Services

Magnify Your Mission : Multiply Your Reach

Contents

Introduction

In today's world of content overwhelm online, visuals can make all the difference to whether someone looks at your content or not. People love visuals because they have an immediate emotional impact and they're easy to take in at a glance. No matter what industry you're in, visual content should be an important component of your content marketing strategy.

In the past, only large companies could afford to invest in visuals. You needed a significant budget in order to hire designers to produce high-quality visuals. But with the tools offered by the internet and PCs, even the smallest business can create stunning, slick, and entertaining visual content that their audience will love.

If you're just getting started with visual content, you'll face some challenges and there is much to learn. Visual content can have a great impact on your business, or it can totally flop if not done well. In this course, you'll learn a step-by-step approach to creating the right type of visuals that will resonate with your audience.

By the time you complete this course you will be able to:

➢ Explore the benefits of using visual content in different areas of your business, so that you know what results you can anticipate

➢ Identify where you can reach your audience with visuals, along with the types of visual content they prefer

➢ Set prioritized goals for what you want to achieve with your visual content, so that you know where to focus your efforts when creating visuals

➢ Identify the visual content you will create first, including repurposing content you already have, in order to save time and avoid starting from scratch

➢ Define how your branding should be incorporated into your visual content to enhance engagement, be memorable, and stay consistently true to your business image

➢ Create the most effective, eye-catching visual content for your audience

➢ Protect and publish your content for maximum exposure to your target audience

This course is broken down into 6 modules to take you step-by-step through How to Attract and Engage Your Audience with Visuals.

The modules follow a logical order, so while you can skip around if you want, it's best to work through them one at a time.

As you go through each module, use your Action Guide to help you complete the Action Steps at the end of each.

What To Expect

Before we start the course, take a minute to think about what you want to get out of it.

In the notes, write down three skills you expect to gain.

And when you're clear about what you want this course to deliver, we can get started

Why Invest in Visual Content?

Visual content consistently outperforms other types of content, so it's well worth your investment. There are several reasons this type of content works so well:

Visual content is memorable

It can be taken in quickly

A wide variety

It's highly engaging

Essential for branding

Why Invest in Visual Content?

Show rather than tell

No language barrier

Can be used anywhere

Elicits an emotional response

➢ **Visual content is memorable.** People see a photo online and it stays with them. You're much more likely to remember an image you saw than something you read in an article or blog post.

➢ **You can take in visuals at a glance.** When you're trying to communicate with your audience through words, it takes more time and attention on your audience's part. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. You can communicate your message more directly.

- ➢ **Visuals are highly engaging**. Especially with social media, we're all competing for the eyeballs and brains of our audiences. A good image stands out among all of the other content that comes across your news feed.

- ➢ **With visuals, you can show rather than tell.** You can use an image to convey complex information in a simple way. This is especially the case with infographics, which take various types of data and present them in a visual format.

- ➢ **Visuals create an emotional connection.** You can inspire any type of emotion with the right image. This leads to better engagement and is one of the major reasons people share visual content online at such high rates.

- ➢ **Visuals are versatile.** Unlike text and other types of content, you can use an image virtually anywhere. You can not only share this content on social media, but use it on your website, blog, sales pages, advertisements, banners, print materials, and so on.

- ➢ **There's no language barrier.** You don't have to localize images. Wherever your audience is in the world and whatever their language they speak, they can get your message.

- ➢ **Visuals are excellent for branding.** Visual content can help you create a strong, clear brand image.

- ➢ **There's a wide variety of different types of content you can make.** Visual content isn't just images and photographs. It can include graphs and diagrams, infographics, quotes, and more

> ### Brainstorming Activity
>
> Using the benefits covered in the module as a starting point, write down 2 or 3 ways that improving your use of visual content could help your business.

Identifying Visuals That Resonate

What makes or breaks the effectiveness of your visual content is how well it resonates with your audience. Badly chosen or produced content doesn't hit the mark. Take a look at the types of content your friends and connections share on social media. What made them share it? They identified with the image, either with its sentiment or some other aspect of it.

Your goal with visual content should be to create or choose visuals that tap into their emotion or which they feel a connection to. In order to know what will engage, you have to understand your audience well.

Learning About Your Audience

There's a good chance that you've already done the work here in identifying and learning about your target audience. Businesses often create target market personas to use in their marketing. This persona identifies demographic and psychological information about a business's optimal potential customer so that the business can choose the right ways to reach them and build a relationship with them.

This is an extremely useful process and, if you haven't done it yet, it's in your best interest to create an audience profile. For our purposes in this course, we won't create an entire profile, but just get to know your audience well enough so that you can choose the right visuals for them.

Start by figuring out where your audience hangs out online. Where does your ideal audience member consume visual content? This could include certain websites, blogs, eZines, forums, or other websites where people consume content. It will definitely include social media, but which social media sites?

As we said, we're not going to create a complete audience profile for all aspects of your business. For our purposes here, let's create a simple persona. Try to imagine what type of person is your ideal follower. Identify some demographic traits and their basic attitudes toward the internet and what they do online. Your goal is to find this person online and identify where they consume visual content.

It's possible that you could have more than one target audience type. For example, your target might be small business owners and freelance service providers. If it

makes sense, break up your audience into specific categories. Try to establish buckets based on the content they might consume. If your market has two somewhat different categories, like new grandparents and millennials, you could separate them.

How to Discover Your Target Market

You might be able to make a good, educated guess as to who your audience is. But it's even better to use actual data to create your audience persona. Here are some ways to do this.

Discover Your Target Market

- Review your existing audience
- Ask people
- Study the competition
- Use Google Analytics
- Listen in to conversations
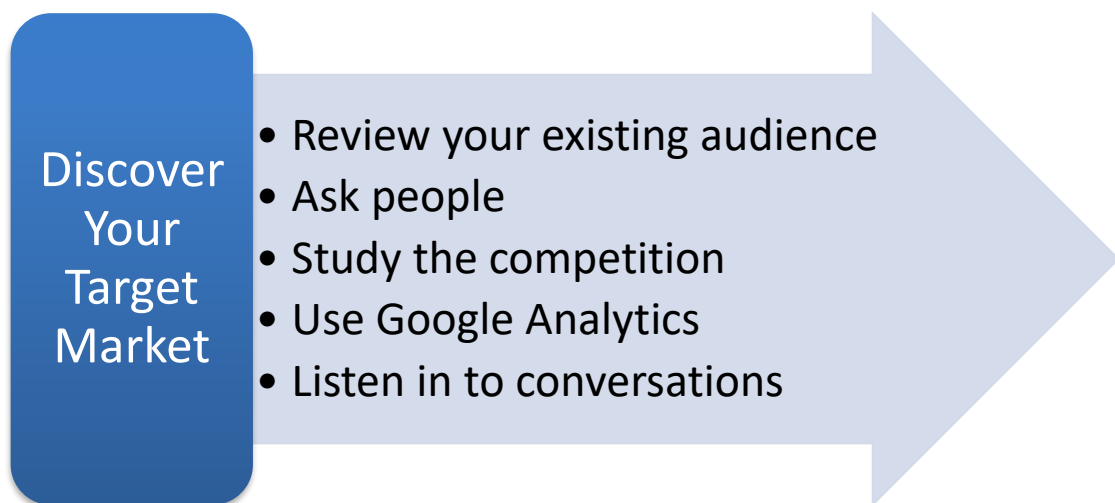
- ➢ **Look at your existing audience.** If you already have followers on social media, customers at your offline store, subscribers to your online newsletter, and so on, look for patterns among these people.

- ➢ **Ask people.** Ask people directly or conduct surveys through whatever communication channels you use with your current audience or customers. Create a short survey asking about visual content consumption habits and offer an incentive to boost your response rates.

- ➢ **Study the competition.** Look at similar companies or companies that offer similar products to you and see what they're doing online. Look particularly at how their audience interacts with their visual content.

- ➢ **Use Google Analytics.** Check out which pieces of visual content on your site or blog get the most views. Discover how people are finding you and where they're coming from.

- ➢ **Listen in to conversations.** Find online forums or social media groups for people in your niche. See what other sites or places online are talking about.

Choosing Visual Content that Resonates

Once you find your target audience online, follow them and take note of what type of visual content they like. Develop a visual profile that defines what they like and what resonates with them.

For example, you might find that your target audience are relentless meme sharers on social media. Looking at the memes shared, you might find that most are funny, making jokes about their everyday lives. This is a good starting point for the content you might share, and you should make a note this on their visual content profile.

When creating this visual content profile, the most important metric to look at is engagement. Engagement refers to liking (on social media), sharing, and commenting. The great thing about social media is that it gives you the metrics directly. Under each piece of content, it tells you exactly how many shares or comments a post gets. Look at these numbers and note them on your profiles.

You can do the same with your own site. Post visuals and see which get the most views through Google Analytics. Post various types of visual content on social media and see which get the most engagement.

For this trial content, you might make a few categories, such as "infographics," "humorous memes," "inspiring quotes" and so on. Or you could choose other qualities such as "text-heavy," "text-light" or "no text." You could classify by what emotions the content inspires, how complex its design elements are, and so on.

Research Competitors

When trying to discover exactly what visual content your audience likes, your competitors offer a goldmine of information. You should spend some time following your competitors and seeing what they create and share, and how their audience reacts to it.

Choose competitors that have been around for a while sharing content and interacting with their audience. Try to choose competitors that have a large and engaged audience.

Look at your chosen competitors' websites, blogs, ads, social media profiles, sales pages, reports, slide shows, and anything else you can find that has visuals. Sign up for their email newsletters, follow them on social media, subscribe to their blog feeds, and so on. Spend some time monitoring them.

Following your competition can give you great ideas. You can learn from them what kind of content resonates with your shared audience. But the goal here isn't just to copy them. You're trying to get a feel for your audience.

You should also be searching for ways to set yourself apart from the competitor in a way that's in keeping with your brand. Try to find ways to make your content slightly different. For example, you might have a bigger, more mainstream competitor that shares content that is "safe" but rather impersonal. Your brand is edgier, so you can set yourself apart by sharing more controversial visuals, or visuals that are more custom-tailored to your audience.

Brainstorming Activity

1. Using the worksheet, create a visual profile of your target market. Include:

    a. A description of your target audience

    b. Where your audience views visual content online

    c. The types of visual content your audience prefers

2. Find some examples of visual content that have been produced by your competitors.

    a. Make notes on what you like and don't like about their content.

    b. Note what you could do to make your visual content different.

Planning Your Visual Content Focus

Once you've gathered your data from the last module, it's time to start planning your visual content strategy.

Start by setting goals for your visual content. Define where you'll use it, where you'll focus your efforts, and what results you expect to get from it.

Examples of goals might be:

➢ Increase engagement with your audience

➢ Grow your online audience

➢ Drive traffic to your website

➢ Increase sales

Make goals specific, citing numbers wherever possible. Instead of just defining your goal as "To grow my online audience," set a target and a deadline for achieving that target, such as, "Grow my audience by 100 each month." This helps you to reach your goals and assess whether you've achieved the goal or not. If you just set the goal "To grow my online audience," how do you know if you've done that? Your goals should be specific and measurable.

You may also define your goal in terms of how it fits into your overall strategy. For example, your visual content itself may not increase sales. But it may help you build a relationship with your audience and give them a reason to check out your website, where you'll then promote products and increase sales.
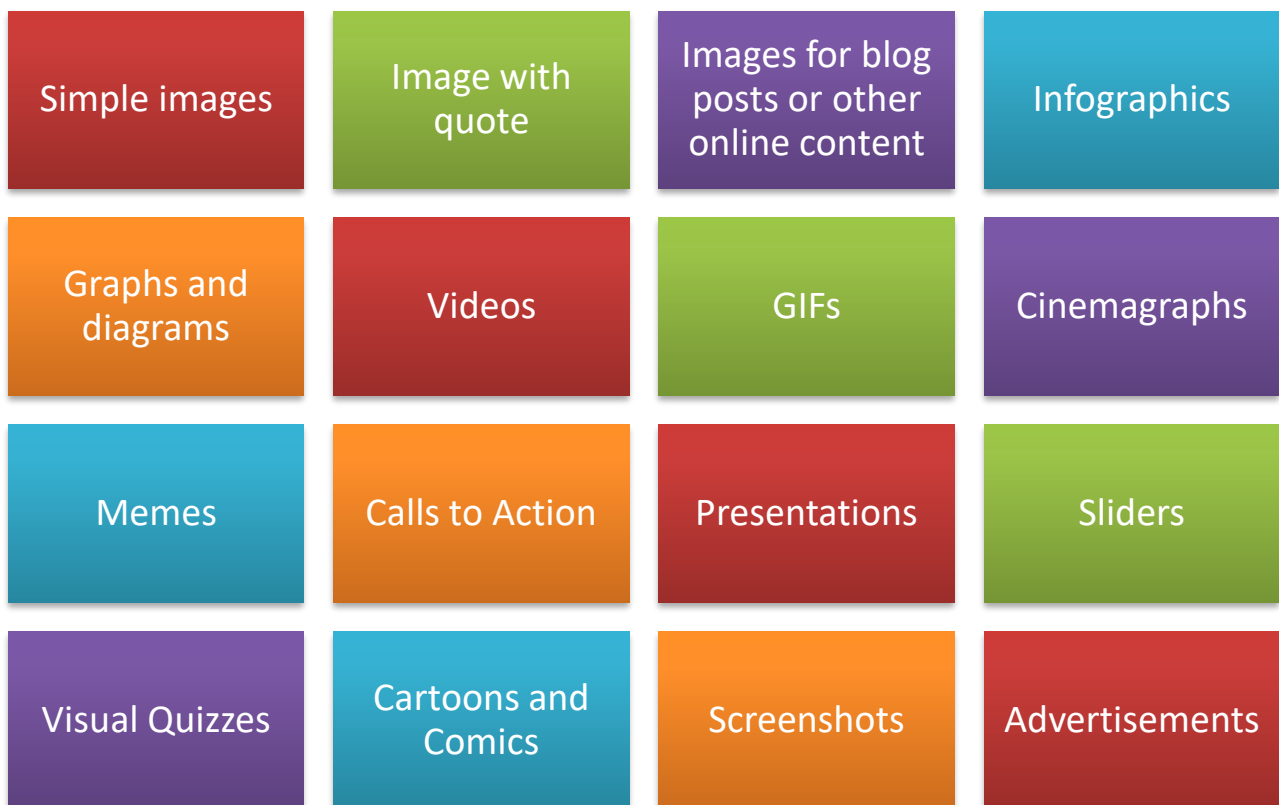
Identify the Types of Visuals You'll Create

Identify what visuals you'll create. This should include the type of content and the topics you'll cover. Types of visual content include:

➢ **Simple images.** This could be an image you create yourself that is designed to resonate with your audience. It has some kind of meaning for them or elicits a certain emotional reaction.

➢ **Image with Quote.** This is an inspirational quote with a related image. The quote gives your audience something further to resonate with beyond just the image.

- **Images for Blog Post.** Blog posts and text-based articles need images in order to make them more fun to read and to make your blog stand out (text only is dull).

- **Infographics.** An infographic is a visual that usually displays some kind of factual information. It takes informational content or data and puts it together so it can be taken in at a glance. An infographic could also present text information, such as "how to" tips. Infographics get a great deal of engagement on social media and other sites online.

- **Graphs and Diagrams.** This is an illustration that takes a simple piece of data and visualizes it in a graph, diagram, or flowchart. It's like a simpler version of an infographic. Whereas an infographic takes a variety of data, this would take just one bit, such as a particular statistic or fact.

- **Videos.** Video creation is outside the scope of this course, but you can incorporate short videos into your visual content strategy if you have the means to produce and publish video.

- **GIFs.** A GIF is a visual that shows a short scene repeating over and over again. These are easy to produce and publish and don't take a great deal of memory.

- **Cinemagraphs.** A cinemagraph is a GIF where just one part of the image moves. Cinemagraphs are currently growing in popularity. They're unique because they combine the still image and GIF moving image.

- **Memes.** A meme is an image with words that's usually humorous. The key to a good meme is that its sentiment is something the audience can relate to. They might say something like, "That moment when you realize…"

- **Calls to Action.** Images can be used as a visual call to action. Visual calls to action produce higher conversions than text-based calls to action. You can use these to get people to sign up for your list, share content ("Share if you agree"), and so on.

- **Presentations.** This is an interactive slideshow that presents information in a logical sequence and in a visual way. People can click each slide to move on to the next one.

- **Sliders.** A slider is an image where you click on it and it "slides" to another image. These are great for showing before and after, showing comparisons, offering quiz questions, or telling a joke (the second image is the punchline).

➢ **Visual Quizzes.** The quizzes people take on social media are a form of visual content.

➢ **Cartoons and Comics.** You can create simple comics that communicate your ideas. These work best when they're humorous.

➢ **Screenshots.** A screenshot is a still image of your computer screen. These are especially useful when you have something you can show the audience how to do.

➢ **Advertisements.** Many ad networks and platforms, including Facebook, allow you to create or add visuals to your advertisements.

Simple images	Image with quote	Images for blog posts or other online content	Infographics
Graphs and diagrams	Videos	GIFs	Cinemagraphs
Memes	Calls to Action	Presentations	Sliders
Visual Quizzes	Cartoons and Comics	Screenshots	Advertisements

Leveraging Existing Content

Before you start creating new content, you should look at your existing content to see if there's anything you can use. Go back over the content you've created until now and look for visuals. Perform an inventory and identify content that you can use. Include here content that could be edited or brushed up. You might have something a little outdated that a simple edit or cropping could make current.

As you inventory your existing content, refer to the data you've collected about your target audience and their tastes. Test each piece of content against this data and ask yourself, "Is this something that will resonate with my audience?" For those that you answer yes, add them to your visual content strategy. For those that won't resonate, see if there are changes you could make to make it relevant. Changes include things like updating information, shifting focus, adding content, changing the tone, and so on.

Repurposing Old Content

You should also consider repurposing other content into visual content. Repurposing means taking old content and making major changes to the content or format so that you have a totally new piece of content.

A common example of repurposing is to take a piece of text content and turn it into something visual. There are many ways this can be done include:

➢ Taking a "tips" article and turning it into an infographic. Each tip is summarized in a short sentence and represented visually.

➢ Extracting the most cogent points from an article and turning them into quotes, each with an accompanying relevant image.

➢ Turning an article into a slideshow presentation. Each major point gets its own slide and the wording is pared down and summarized.

Any type of content can potentially be repurposed into any other. A few other examples of the things you can do include:

➢ Taking screenshots of a video and adding text to create visuals.

➢ Turning an eBook into a long interactive slideshow presentation.

➢ Identifying the most salient points of a podcast interview and turning them into an infographic.

From the examples above, you can see the versatility and time-saving ability of repurposing old content as compared to creating new content.

Developing Your Content Creation Plan

Hopefully at this point, you have a good deal of old content you can use as-is, brush up, or repurpose to create new content. This will save you a great deal of time and work. Now, it's time to decide what further content you'll create.

Use the data you've collected on the topics and types of content your audience likes to create your visual content strategy. Brainstorm a list of ideas for your visual content. The ideas don't have to be fully formed. In the next few modules, you'll learn methods to enhance your visual content to make it more engaging, and then we'll discuss tools you can use to create this content.

Brainstorming Activity

1. Write down the overall goals for your visual content

2. Make a list of all the content you currently have that you can repurpose into visual content that meets your goals. Use space in the Action Guide, additional paper, or create a spreadsheet for listing everything as needed.

3. Choose from the visual content types listed in the module, or add your own, and decide on the visual content you will create. Use additional paper or create a spreadsheet as needed.

Enhance Engagement with Your Branding

One of the benefits of visual content is that it helps with reinforcing your branding. When planning any visuals, branding is an essential consideration.

A company's brand is the image it creates in the minds of its audience. This is done through the business conveying its personality, and using consistent design elements. These design elements tell the audience that this content, without a doubt, comes from this particular company. It's easy to recognize.

There's more to branding than just visuals, but for our purposes here, we'll discuss some ways you can add branding to your visual content to increase engagement and its effectiveness.

Identifying Brand Elements

Brands use the same colors, design features, imagery, words, and phrases to create a consistent experience for their audience. Your audience sees these same design elements each them and then they know it's you. They come to expect these visual elements and they give your brand consistency.

When considering branding design elements, keep in mind your company's unique sales proposition or company mission. Your branding should harmonize with these core aspects of your business.

First, define the elements that will create your brand identity. These could include:

Logos

• Include your logo somewhere on your visual content

Colours

• Certain colors or a color scheme that is used to show people it's you

Fonts

• Particular fonts you consistently use

Layout

• A regular layout or theme

Framing/Borders

• Distinctive framing

Style

• A style such as casual, formal, business-like, hip, or vintage

These elements might be a small part of your visual content, but they can have a big impact. The colours you use, for example, evoke certain emotions. Some fonts look whimsical or comical, while others are formal or make your business look trustworthy.

Applying Brand Elements

There are many ways to incorporate these brand elements into your visuals. You can put a small logo in the corner of your images. You can use the same or a similar border for each inspirational quote you create. Branding elements can also be included in the descriptions of your visual content posted on social media, such as a catchphrase or hashtag.

You can get some ideas on how to incorporate brand elements into your visual content by looking at the research you did earlier. Which design elements did your audience like best? For example, you may find that they respond to certain colour schemes more than others. Also look at the research you did on competitors.

Try to choose visual elements that you can use for each and every piece of content. Branding works best when it's consistent. Branding elements you can use on all content will be the most consistent.

You don't have to completely decide everything now. What's important is to keep in mind branding elements as you go about choosing or creating visual content. Once you start publishing visual content, you can then see which elements performed best.

Brainstorming Activity
Specify the key elements of your brand that you'll need to incorporate into your visual content.

Creating Attention-Grabbing Content

Now that you know your market well and you have some visual content ideas, it's time to start producing content. There is an abundance of good tools available for creating visual content and many are free or low-priced. These tools are really what make visual content creation so easy and accessible for any business. Here are some of the best and most popular tools for creating visual content.
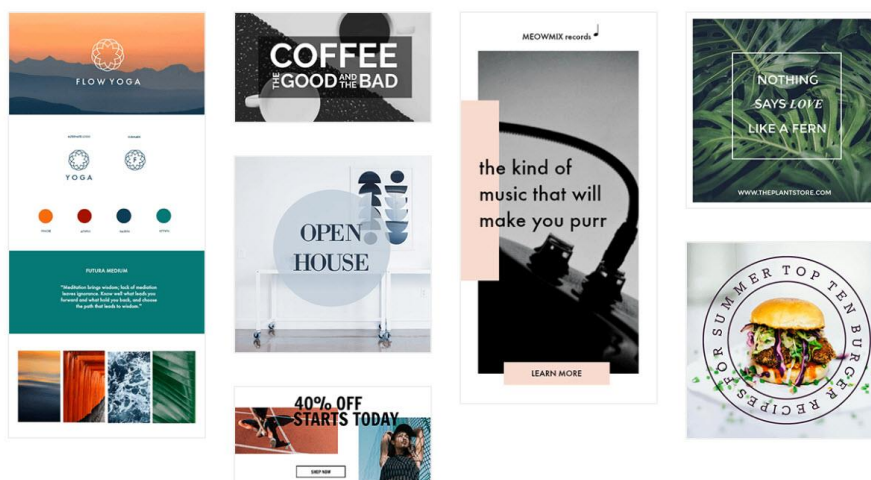
Canva

Canva is great for creating all kinds of visual content. It's one of the most robust programs available and gets great reviews. Among its other features, it offers a wide range of free templates designed for specific social media platforms. It's easy to create and customize images and it's designed so that non-designers and beginners can use it with ease.

Examples of layouts from Canva - https:/about.canva.com

PicMonkey

PicMonkey is very similar to Canva. The main difference is the way the paid versions work. With Canva, you pay for each extra premium feature you use, whereas PicMonkey has a monthly fee that allows you to use everything. So, if you find yourself using a lot of the premium images and layouts with Canva, you might want to consider PicMonkey.

Examples of layouts from Pickmonkey - https:/picmonkey.com/design

GIFMaker

As the name suggests, this program is for making GIFs. Like Canva and PicMonkey, it's easy to use even for a total beginner. The program offers various customization options and it allows you to add audio if you want.

Adobe Photoshop

Adobe Photoshop is considered the industry standard in visual content creation. It is very powerful and can create virtually anything you want as far as graphic design goes. Adobe Photoshop is a little trickier to use so it's recommended for people with some graphic design experience.

Gimp

Gimp is similar to Photoshop and also considered an industry standard. It's loaded with features and offers tutorials, guides, and other how-to content for beginners to learn how to use it.

Desygner

This is a free tool for creating certain types of visuals that includes banners, social media posts, Facebook cover photos, and so on.


Examples of layouts from Desyner - https:/desygner.com

Type Genius

Type Genius is a great tool for fonts and typography. It offers a wide variety of fonts and combinations of fonts. One of the best features is that it shows you sites that use each font so you can get an idea of how it will look.

Word Swag

Word Swag is a really easy tool for adding visuals or editing visuals for social media on your mobile device. It allows you to create visuals on the go and post as soon as you're done. Word Swag is especially good for posting quotes.
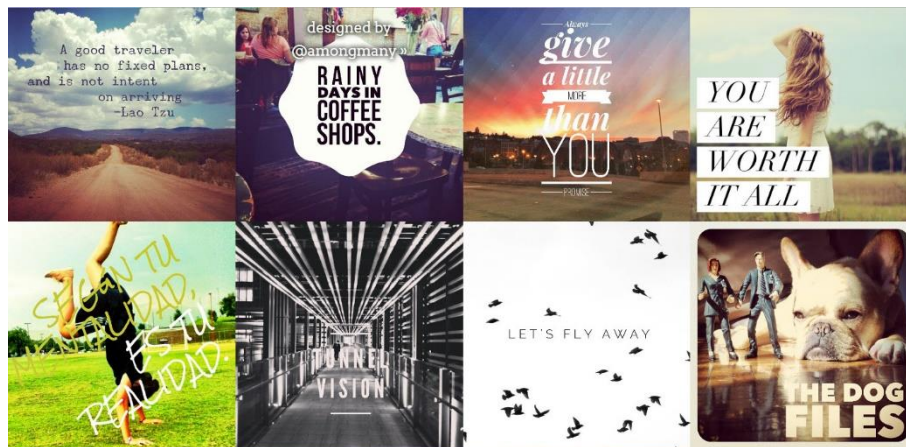
The Stocks

The Stocks is a stock photo site that brings stock photos together from all over the web and other stock image sites. Some of the photos are free and some require payment, and you're free to alter the images in any way you'd like. It's a more trustworthy alternative to regular stock photo sites, which can cost hundreds of dollars and may not offer anything great.

Piktochart

Piktochart offers a library of over 600 professionally-designed infographic templates you can pick from to help you make beautiful infographics, presentations, and printables. You can start with a free account for life and then upgrade to get more features.

Examples of infographic layouts from Piktochart - https://piktochart.com/templates/

Unsplash

Unsplash is another stock image program but what's unique about it is that they hand select a collection of new photos each day. It can be interesting browsing these random images and seeing what you can use.

Infogram

Infogram is a tool for making infographics that is very straightforward and easy to use. It offers free themes into which you plug your information or data. It's free with a reasonably priced premium version with more features.

Creately

Creately is for creating diagrams and other visualizations of statistical data. It's also collaborative, so you can create and edit with members of your team.

Skitch

Skitch is Evernote's screen capture software. It doesn't offer the wide range of features that SnagIt does, but it's simpler and more user-friendly.

BeFunky

BeFunky is a site for very simple online editing. You don't even need to register. You just upload a photo, edit, and save, and then it's ready to post.

SnagIt

SnagIt is a premium screen capture software program that can also be used as a photo editor. It has a robust range of features and generally considered to be the top tool for screen capture at the time of writing.

Example of editing dashboard in Snagit
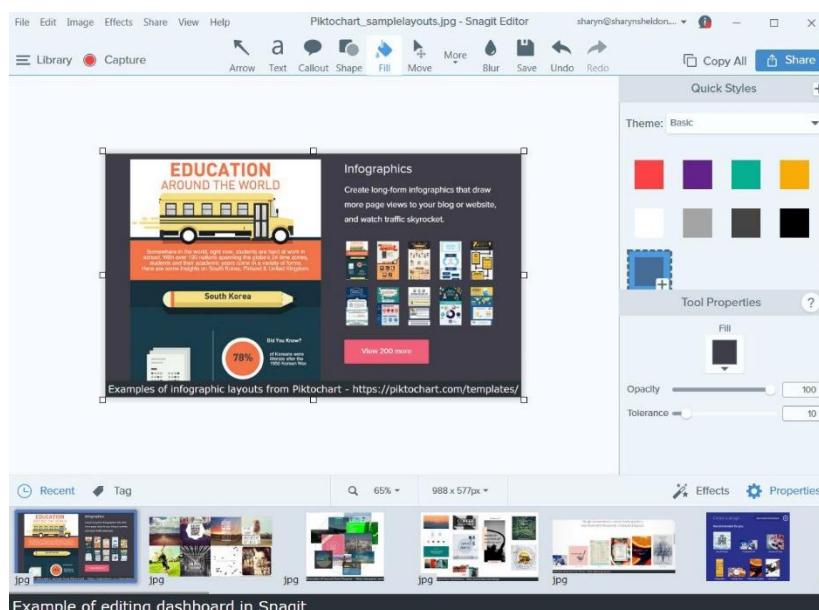
This is a video editing program. There are free and paid versions.

For each tool you're considering, take the time to give it a test drive. See how easy it is for you to use and what features it offers. If it's a premium program, try the free trial version first before buying. Always read reviews before purchasing any product.

Outsourcing Your Visual Content Creation

You may decide you don't have the time or energy to learn how to make your own visuals. If it's too much of a time-drain, you can outsource to a designer and get higher quality work. It costs money, of course, but can be well worth it.

If you're outsourcing, make sure you communicate to the designer exactly what you want. Provide them with guidelines, examples, information they need to know about branding, the goal for the content, and whatever else they need to know.

Guidelines for Graphics

Canvas Size

Here are the current standard recommended sizes for the main types of content on the main different platforms:

Facebook

- **Profile Photo: 180 x 180**
- **Cover Photo: 820 x 312**
- **Shared Post Image: 1200 x 630**
- **Event Image: 1920 x 1080**

Instagram

- **Profile Picture: 110 x 110**
- **Image Thumbnail: 161 x 161**
- **Photo Size: 1080 x 1080**
- **Shared Video: 1080 wide**
- **Instagram Stories: 1080 x 1920**

Twitter
- Profile Photo: 400 x 400
- Header Photo: 1500 x 1500
- In-Stream Image: 1024 x 512 (max); 440 x 220 recommended

LinkedIn
- Personal Profile Image: 400 x 400
- Personal Background Image: 1584 x 396
- Company Logo: 300 x 300 (60 x 60 sq logo)
- Company Cover Image: 1536 x 768
- Company Page Banner: 646 x 220
- Shared Image: 1104 x 736; recommended 350 wide

Pinterest
- Profile Picture: 165 x 165
- Pins Preview (main page): 236 x 192
- Pins (expanded): 600w x 735h
- Board Cover Image: 222 x 150

YouTube
- Channel Profile Image: 800 x 800
- Channel Cover Art: 2560 x 1440
- Video Upload Thumbnails: 1280 x 720 (16:9 aspect ratio)

Fonts

If you already have fonts that you use for your brand, you should continue to use them with your visual content. This will tell your audience that your images are yours.

If you don't already have fonts chosen, here are some things to consider:

Choose fonts that are clear and easy to read. You might find a script that's beautiful, such as a gothic script or font that looks like handwriting, but you should aim for clarity. The most important thing is that your audience can easily read your image's text.

When choosing fonts for headlines, make sure they're large and different-looking enough that it's clear they're headlines. If you use the same font or size as the regular text, the headline won't stand out.

Consider how the font you use harmonizes with the visual content. For example, if your image announces a holiday sale, use a font that looks like that holiday; something festive for Christmas or something spooky for Halloween. For a humorous image, choose a font that looks fun and light-hearted.

Experiment with font combinations. Sometimes similar fonts work well together while sometimes contrasting fonts make a good combination. Try different things to see what looks good. Canva has a font-picking tool to help you with this.

Colors

Stick to the brand colors you identified earlier in the course. Here are a few additional guidelines for choosing colors:

➢ Bright colors attract attention.

➢ Don't go overboard with colors or it can look confusing or cluttered. Try to keep contrasting colors to a minimum.

➢ Use colors that go along with your theme; for example, black and orange for Halloween or green and red for Christmas.

Imagery

If you want to incorporate images into your visual content, you need to handle them appropriately. Make sure you understand the rights for the images you use. Images from stock image sites or creative commons have usage rights. Sometimes you have to attribute the image to its creator. Pixabay is a good source of free, copyright-free public domain images.

Make sure that all of the imagery you use is strictly relevant to your visual content.

Tips for Great Graphics

- • Avoid Clashes
- • Aim for Contrast
- • Choose Original Fonts
- • Use Text Sparingly
- • Consider Text Placement
- • Simple is Best
- • Think Outside the Box
- • Borders are Your Best Friend
- • Take Advantage of Filters
- • Try Transparent Icons
- • Learn Some Composition
- • Crop!
- • More 'How' then 'Wow'
- • Tell a Story
- • Use Stock Images Well
- • Pay Attention to Platform

Avoid Clashes. Try to create your visual content so that there aren't clashing colors or fonts. These can create truly headache-inducing visual effects. One example of this is stark white text on a black background.

Aim for Contrast. Try to choose colors and design features that offer a bit of contrast (but don't clash). Contrast makes an image interesting. If it's all the same color, it looks dull and washed out.

Choose Original Fonts. Some fonts get over-used online. Common fonts include Comic Sans and Papyrus. When choosing a font, conduct a little research and find out where else it's being used. If it's used widely, consider choosing another font with more personality.

Use Text Sparingly. If you're adding text to images, such as an inspirational quote, use text sparingly and try to maintain a good balance. Make sure it doesn't take all of the attention away from the image.
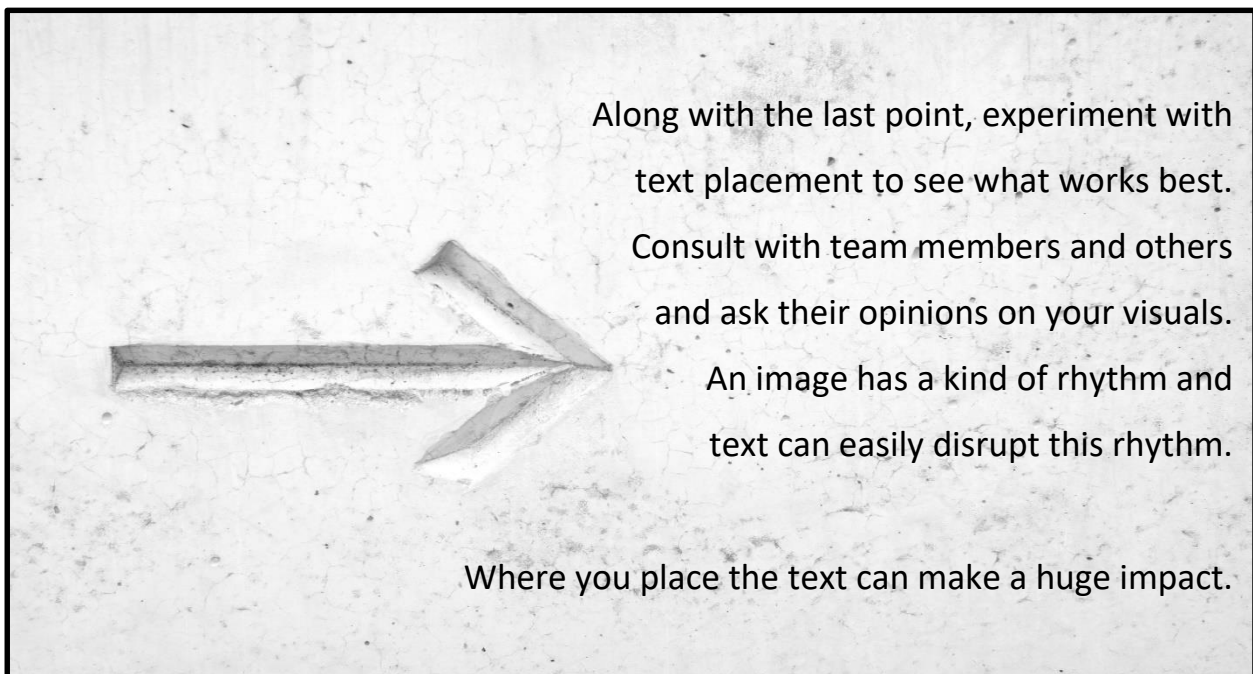
Along with the last point, experiment with text placement to see what works best. Consult with team members and others and ask their opinions on your visuals. An image has a kind of rhythm and text can easily disrupt this rhythm.

Where you place the text can make a huge impact.

Simple Is Best. Aim for simplicity. The message of an overly complicated image is likely to get lost. Create space in your visuals and eliminate clutter. White space is your friend.

Image: Unsplash.com

Think Outside the Box. As with any creative pursuit, try to be unique and do something no one else is doing. Watch your competition and other content creators to see what they publish so that you can do something else. Fill in the gaps.

Borders Are Your Best Friend. If your visual content uses a pale or white background, add a border. A border will make it stand out from what's around it. It'll set your image apart. Grids and frames also make an image look more professional.

Take Advantage of Filters. Filters are a common feature on all visual editing programs. They can accomplish a number of things. They make an image look unique, give it a different feel or emotional aspect, or make improvements.

A filter can turn a washed-out image into something striking.

Image: Unsplash.com

Try Transparent Icons. The transparent icon is a relatively new feature that many programs offer. It puts a transparent image over your regular image and you can create some really cool designs this way. One way to use it is to superimpose your logo on an image. This is a great way to add your logo in a subtle way.

Learn Some Composition. It can make a huge difference with your visual content creation if you know a bit about composition. It's a huge rabbit hole to fall into, but even a few quick tips can help you make major improvements to your visual content.
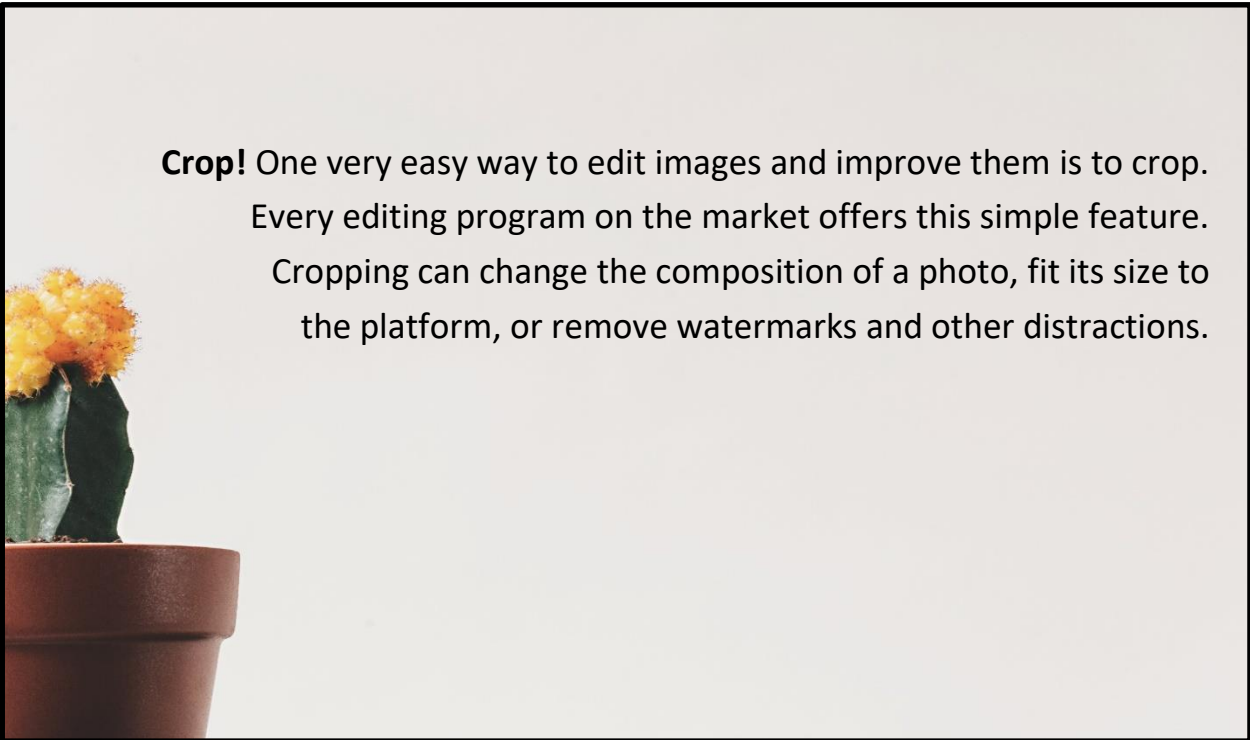
Crop! One very easy way to edit images and improve them is to crop. Every editing program on the market offers this simple feature. Cropping can change the composition of a photo, fit its size to the platform, or remove watermarks and other distractions.
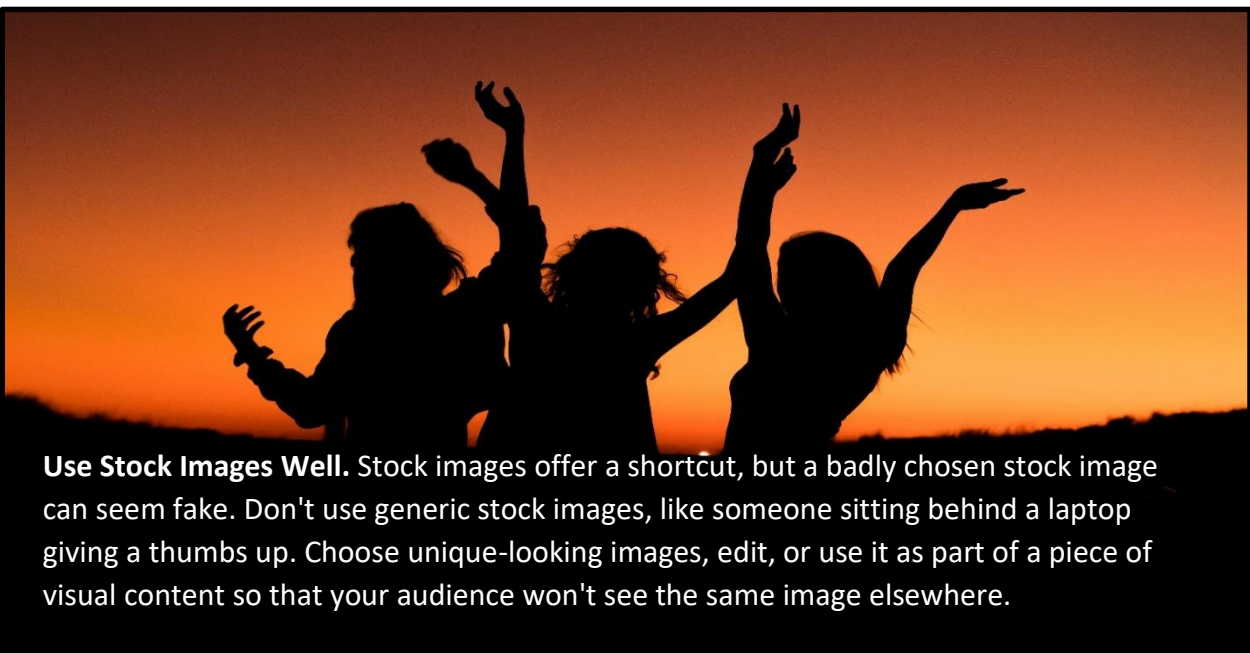
Use Stock Images Well. Stock images offer a shortcut, but a badly chosen stock image can seem fake. Don't use generic stock images, like someone sitting behind a laptop giving a thumbs up. Choose unique-looking images, edit, or use it as part of a piece of visual content so that your audience won't see the same image elsewhere.

More "How" Than "Wow."

- Remember that you're competing with many other pieces of content for your audience's attention.

- Anyone can use loud colors and bold statements, but if you give your audience something extra, they'll keep their eyes on you.

- Use infographics and other visual content to present information that your audience can learn from and use.

Tell a Story. Try to choose images that tell a story.	Stories are emotionally powerful and resonate with people.	A story image hints at what happened before or what'll happen after.

Pay Attention to Platform. Understand each platform well and what it likes. For example, certain types of visual content play better on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and so on. Choose and customize your visuals with platform in mind.

Brainstorming Activity

1. Complete the visual content worksheet including details of all of the elements you'll incorporate into your visual content.

2. Go ahead and create at least one piece of the visual content you outlined, following the tips from the module.

Image: Unsplash.com

Publishing Content for Maximum Visibility

The final step is to publish your content. Choose your platforms and which content will go on which. Here are some guidelines for using visual content.

Stamp Your Content with Your Logo

There's always a chance that someone will steal your visual content. Any piece of content you publish could be copied and pasted elsewhere. One way to make it harder for people to do this is to add your watermark to your images.

A watermark is a small signature that shows an image is yours. You can use your logo as a watermark. The key is to make it large enough to be visible and legible, but small enough that it doesn't distract from the image. Also, make sure your watermark doesn't disturb the composition of the image. If it's too big or noticeable, it might shift the balance of an image.

Any image editing software will allow you to add a watermark.

Use the Highest Quality Possible

For each image, use the highest quality possible. Consider the platform first, and size your image so that it's the highest possible resolution for the platform's specifications. High resolution images can be easily resized for different mediums. Avoid low-quality images, as they don't adapt to different screen sizes and can make you appear unprofessional.

Image Formats

You'll also have to consider image formats. There are a few formats that are the most commonly used:

.PNG – This format is high quality and can be shrunk to very small sizes with little loss of resolution, which makes it great for logos and infographics. It offers very high color depth. The downside is that it's a relatively large file size.

.JPG – This format is somewhat of an industry standard. It also shrinks well and offers high quality, but is a smaller file size.
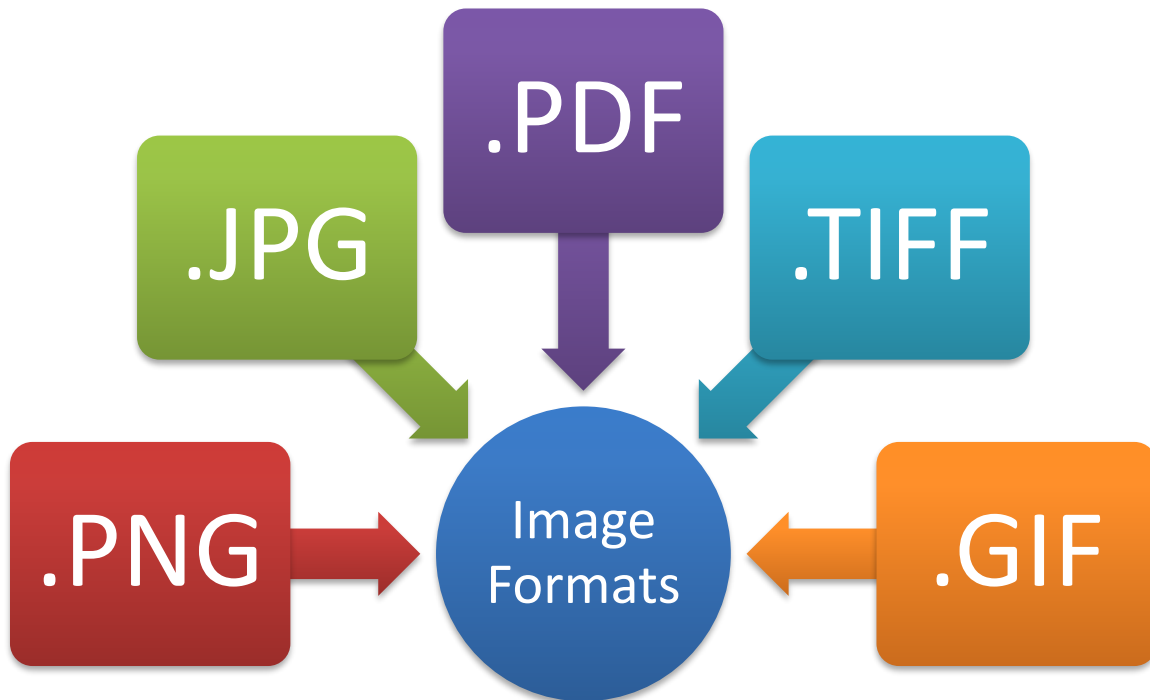
.PDF – This format is good for downloadable visual content. If you're using visuals in downloadable content and you want the quality of the file to be high, this is a good format to use. A PDF looks the same no matter what operating system, device, or software is used to view it.

.TIFF – Similar to PDFs, there is no loss of quality when a TIFF is downloaded and it looks the same across platforms and devices. There is no compression, so TIFF files tend to be quite large.

.GIF – GIFs are images that use animation. They have simple colors and the resolution is low, but the advantage here is that they load quickly.

Publishing Your Content

The next major decision is where to publish your visual content. Go back over your notes and review. Create a strategy that identifies what type of content you'll post where. Keep in mind that you can always change your strategy once you start publishing and tracking your results.

How do you know what's working and what isn't? You can start by looking at the native data you'll get from the platforms where you publish. Facebook and other social media platforms offer analytics, in addition to the simple data you can see, such as number of comments, shares, and likes.

You can also ask your audience for their feedback. Ask them what content they enjoyed the most and what they'd like to see more of. Ask them for ideas of topics they'd like to see you handle.

A more rigorous way to discover which content resonates is to split-test. This means running two versions of the same image with just one element changed. You run them both and see which performs better. This tells you which element your audience prefers.

For example, you might run two versions of the same image, one with a border and one without. If the one with the border gets more engagement than the one without, this tells you that your audience likes borders.

Monitor your visual content and see how it's received by your audience. You can then make the necessary changes for future pieces.

Brainstorming Activity

Note where you'll publish your new visual content and what format you'll use for each place. Where you need to have different sizes for different platforms, note that under 'format' in your worksheet as well.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Now, you're ready to start putting your visual content strategy into action. In this course, you learned:

- ➢ The benefits of visual content for your business and what results you can expect from a solid visual content strategy

- ➢ Who your audience is, where they hang out online, and what kind of visual content they prefer

- ➢ How to identify goals for your visual content so that it fits into your overall business and marketing strategy

- ➢ The importance of repurposing in order to leverage old content, as well as how to brush up the existing content you have so that it can be published anew

- ➢ How to define brand elements that you can add to your visual content so that it's more engaging, memorable, consistent and relevant to your audience

- ➢ How to create the most effective, eye-catching visual content for your audience, taking into consideration elements such as canvas size, fonts, imagery, and best practices

- ➢ Methods for publishing to reach your target audience

Remember that trends and audience tastes change. Stay on the ball and stay ahead of the game by monitoring your visual content's performance and paying close attention to your audience. If you keep listening, you'll constantly improve your content and keep seeing results.

> **Brainstorming Activity**
> List the tasks you'll need to complete to finish creating your new visual content, or to go on and create the next piece. Include deadlines for each task.

About The Author:

Do you ever wish there was an easier way to attract clients?

If you're thinking "Yes, I do!" you're certainly not alone. Many professional service providers feel exactly the same way as you because their expertise is in providing the service that they're qualified to provide, rather than in the selling of it.

And just imagine for a second how much easier it would be, how much happier you'd feel and how much more you could be earning if suddenly you discovered the secret to having a crowd of clients wanting to engage you, rather than you having to go out searching for them.

If our paths haven't crossed before, let me introduce myself. I'm Tim Dodd, a former chartered accountant and specialist business workflow consultant. In simple terms, I help clients put in place processes that attract potential new business automatically.

If you're an entrepreneurial business owner or professional service provider, who would like to automate their lead generation, prospect follow-up and business relationship building processes in order to spend more chargeable time working with your best clients, doing what you enjoy doing most, then I'm certain that I can help you to achieve that goal.

If you like the idea but aren't convinced I'd be able to help your particular business, make an appointment to speak with me today and find out why I'm so confident that I can.

Just head over to www.3dconsultingservices.com/call and select the appointment time that's most convenient for you.
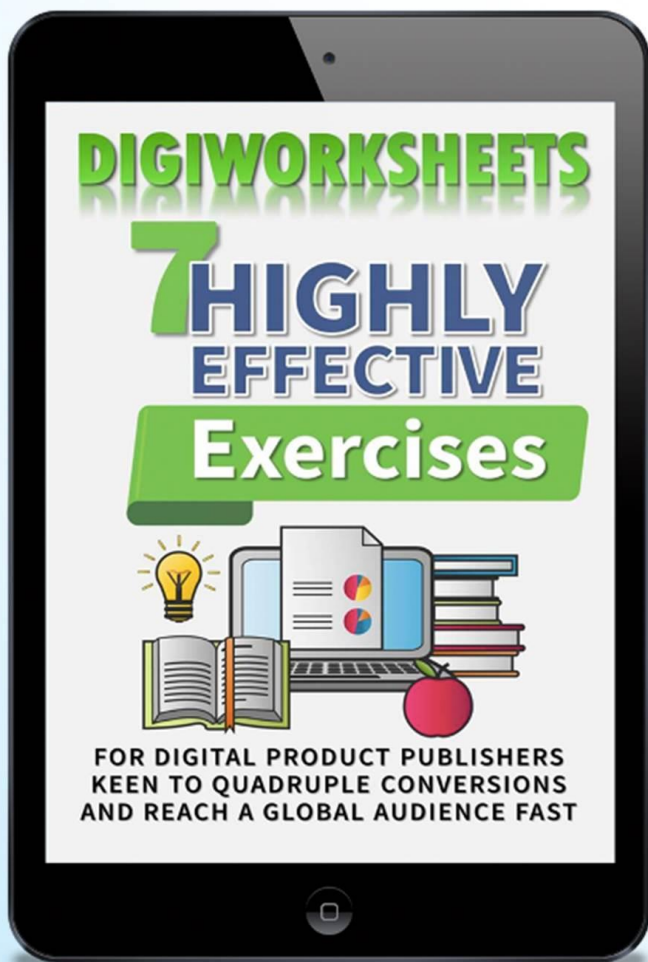
There's no charge, and when we talk I promise to provide you with at least one strategy you could implement immediately which would transform how you won new clients in the future!

And, whether you decide to get in touch or not, may your God always be with you and continue to guide you along the path you've chosen and were created to pursue in order to prosper and live a uniquely fulfilling life.

I truly look forward to speaking with you.

Tim

Discover 7 Highly Effective, Value-Adding Coaching Exercises Guaranteed To Boost Your Own Digital Product & Online Course Sales That You Can Start Using Today...

DIGIWORKSHEETS

7 HIGHLY EFFECTIVE Exercises

FOR DIGITAL PRODUCT PUBLISHERS KEEN TO QUADRUPLE CONVERSIONS AND REACH A GLOBAL AUDIENCE FAST

You'll Truly Appreciate How Well These Exercises Work Very Soon After You've Completed Them!

Whether you sell your own digital products or online courses on a third party platform like Amazon, Udemy or just your own local website, you're about to find out how you can quickly and easily make considerably more money from doing it...

So if you want to learn how you can easily set yourself apart from all the other suppliers in your market, take a quick look at this new course right away and then start by completing the first exercise, and you'll quickly see what excellent value it represents.

Get Access Now!

3d Consulting Services

3d Consulting Services

Magnify Your Mission : Multiply Your Reach