

TRADITIONAL IS OUT, SOCIAL MEDIA IS IN

London Case Study

Back in the day, social media was just used to connect with people for the simple purpose of connecting with someone. Facebook created a way to keep up with distant relatives, Twitter was there for users to simply share daily thoughts with friends, and anytime there was a beautiful sunset or your son's little league team won their first championship, there was Instagram to share it with the world. Social media was just social communication in its simplistic form. However, in the year 2018, things have changed. Social media is opening up a whole new type of marketing for brands and companies rightfully named "social marketing". Now brands can get on a whole new level of advertising and intimately develop close relationships with their customers. Social media has changed the way companies view advertising/ marketing, and one industry that is jumping on the "social marketing" band wagon is tattoo shops. Tattoos have been around for centuries, but this new way of creating brand awareness has grown immensely. Now tattoo artists can have an opportunity to share their work and potentially increase their sale numbers by utilizing social media to promote themselves. One tattoo shop that has had some success in creating more foot traffic for their shop is Hammersmith Tattoo, located in the west part of London in the UK. Their mission statement, which was found on the shops official Facebook Page is as follows:

"We perform all types of custom tattooing here at our shop, from old school and neo traditional through to new school and photo-based realism. This means you will never have the same design as anyone else; it will be a truly unique piece from an established

custom design tattoo studio. At our Award-Winning studio, we feel the consultation process prior to the tattoo appointment is an important stage toward the preparation of your tattoo. You will be required to bring with you any reference material you have in mind for your design and let us know your own ideas and requirements regarding your tattoo. We will take this, in addition to our ideas and have a design that has been hand drawn for you and prepared in time for your appointment. Any alterations can be reworked until it meets your requirements. Here at Hammersmith tattoos we pride ourselves on being a studio that is passionate about custom tattoos and body piercing art.” [HammersmithTat]

Including their Facebook Page, Hammersmith Tattoo also mainly uses the social platforms Instagram and Tumblr to share content like previous works an artist has done on a client, shop hours, and appointment cancellations in hopes to possibly gain another client. The reasoning behind these postings is to benefit the shop by spreading brand awareness, increase foot traffic, and ultimately drive sales.

The tattoo business has without a doubt been blooming since the start of the century. Statics show that over 40% of millennials own at least one tattoo, (Quick Books Canada Teams, n.d). Surely enough social media has played a role in their success. First off, social media should be one, if not the most important tool for tattoo shops to introduce and bring in potential clients to their businesses. However, social media isn't only for socializing, it can also be utilized as a free way for you to advertise yourself and your business to your followers and potential clients. To explain, tattoo parlors can utilize social media platforms to showcase their work to

bring customers to their businesses, and since social media can be viewed internationally, this form of communication can lead parlors to bring in international followers as well as domestic followers. By using social media as a way to spread shop awareness on an international level, this can bring in more tourism to check out tattoo shops and potentially increase the number of customers visiting the shops. Tattoo artists can also utilize social media to gain more knowledge of the different types of styles of other tattoo artists and allows them to either analyze competition or possibly reach out to other artists. By doing this, new perspectives and ideas are being created, and business continues to grow.

There is a lot of things to consider when putting your tattoo business on social media platforms for the whole world to see. According to the article, " Social Media Tips for Tattoo Artist," Cassie Furnare basically breaks down the best ways for tattoo artist to utilize social media. (Furnare, 2015) To start, the first step discusses how tattoo pictures should be clear and viewable. Simply put, when tattoo shops post examples of different tattoo styles, the pictures should be in good quality so that the potential clients can notice all the details put into it. The second tip the article suggests for tattoo shops to grow their businesses using social media is communication with their social audiences. To sum up, if the shop's audience has any questions or concerns, the shop is responsible to reply as soon as possible so potential clients feel like the shop is professional and reliable. Brands in general should be dedicated to building a bridge of trust between company and viewer so that the viewer can one day possibly become a potential client. The third step, Furnare suggests, is to remind tattoo shops to post to their shops social media accounts regularly. "You want your audience to know you're up and running. As well as, make sure to post about any inconveniences or upcoming events; so, your followers can know

ahead of time before they settle with any plans.” (Furnare,2015) The fourth step is to consider using unique hashtags to gain viewers’ attention. Unlike simple hashtags, unique hashtags have less of a chance being caught up in other viewer’s content that are not related to the tattoo shop’s content. Also, by having hashtags specialized for each of the shop’s artists provides interested viewers to look at that specific artist only, and by using these unique hashtags there is no problem finding that specific artists past work on social media. The last few suggestions include leaving all personal business in personal social accounts. “Remember to stay focus on promoting your business.” states Furnare. (Furnare,2015) Lastly, don’t forget to add contact information and hours of operation in places where it's easy for your viewers and followers to see on all platforms. By doing this, potential clients can find what they are looking for in a quick and simplistic manner, and do not have to spend useless time on irrelevant content.

Hammersmith Tattoo is in the West part of London, UK. They specialize in photo realism, but they do a variety of different work including services outside tattooing like body piercing. Referring to their website, Hammersmith artists offer high quality tattoos done to a professional standard. Prices for tattoos may be based on size, but also are based on how detailed the tattoo is. (Hammersmith Tattoo, n.d) The website also encouraged to call the shop for more information and walk ins are welcome. The shop has won multiple prestigious awards including Best Black and Grey from the 3rd Portsmouth Tattoo Extravaganza back in 2013, and Best Small Black and Grey from The Great British Tattoo Show in London in 2012. The shop promotes their six artists and what tattoo styles they specialize in, as well as a little background information on how much experience each artist has and what they have to offer as a customer’s potential artist.

To analyze how tattoo shops, use social media to benefit their business, we decided to take a look at four shops from several different parts of the world. Since tattoo shops can be variously different from shop to shop, social media can be used differently from as well. Along with Hammersmith Tattoo, we decided to look at Black Garden Tattoo, which was another shop based in London. The reason for doing this was because we wanted to get another perspective on how a London shop could utilize social media differently than another London shop. Along with the two British shops we also took a look at Elm Street Tattoo—which is an American shop based in Texas—and as well as Three Tides Tattoo located in Japan.

Before we get to Hammersmith Tattoo, we wanted to look at another London shop that may be using social media differently than Hammersmith. Black Garden Tattoo is also located in Central London and specialize in a variety of tattoo styles. According to their website, the shop seems to only be on the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and Tumblr. On their Facebook page they seem to post often and, on all content, posted there is always an encouragement for potential clients to call for free consultations and when that specific artist might be free that day (Appendix A). By doing this, they are spreading brand awareness to show potential clients what they have to offer. Along with posting pictures of different past tattoos, they also post about tattoo conventions that they are featured in and again encourage viewers to secure their spot to be tattooed by the featured artists at the convention (Appendix B) This method of using social media supports that once again they are attempting to spread brand awareness and ultimately drive sales.

Upon analyzing Elm Street Tattoo Parlor, the shop seems to have well thought out platforms for their viewers to depend on. As an illustration, Elm Street Tattoos has 31,624

followers on their Facebook account and 95.8 followers on their Instagram account. Both platforms basically have the same content, which is a good strategy, because viewers can get the same information no matter which platform they prefer. Both platforms have consistent posting, with each post being between days of each other. For example, their last post was April 1, 2018 and the one after that was posted on March 30, 2018(C). In a similar fashion to Cassie Furnace's tips from the article Social Media Tips for Tattoo Artists, Elm Street does also use unique hashtags such as #elmstreettattoo, #tattootexas #tattoodallas,(C). These hashtags narrowed down the search, which led viewers to past posts relating to Elm Street tattoos. Meanwhile, on Facebook and Instagram, Elm Street Tattoos incorporates the “@” symbol to tag the artist that creates each tattoo posted. (Appendix C) On Instagram each tattoo post also has links to that specific artist's Instagram account; which provides their own contact information. (Appendix D) Not to mention, Elm Street Tattoo also promotes other services they offer at their shop on social media, such as microblading and piercing. (Appendix E) Elm Street Tattoo in addition has posts that express different promotions like tour dates and other events that involve the tattoo shop. By the same token, Elm Street also posts about any inconveniences that might cause the shop to close for a day or two, just so their viewers can know ahead of time and have a chance to plan their day accordingly. Lastly, both social platforms have the shops “about information” and hours of operation. Without a doubt, Elm Street Tattoo provides a well-established social media system to their customers and has a clear understanding on the right way to reach out to their followers/clients.

Another shop we looked at was Three Tides Tattoo in Japan. Three Tides Tattoo in Tokyo and Osaka, Japan have Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter accounts. They mainly

use Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. They also have a YouTube channel, however the only video posted was six years ago, so that is not as relevant to their business as their other platforms. Regarding their Twitter account, they use it mostly to promote or direct traffic to their Instagram account since that is where all their pictures of their tattoos are. They keep up with their Twitter frequently but not daily. All their social media is like that, kept up frequently but not daily. Also, with their Twitter, they use it for news too. For example, they went to Paris a few weeks ago (Appendix F) for a tattoo convention and they tweeted about them going and thanking the convention planners for inviting them. Facebook on the other hand is used a bit differently. For Facebook, they do post pictures more frequently than on Twitter (Appendix G) and use it a bit more often. They have reviews for their shop on their Facebook page too. They use Facebook almost as an extension of their Instagram as both accounts have the same pictures, videos and other media, the Facebook is just for their clients that don't have Instagram and to be a bit more formal. Finally, the big one, Instagram. Three Tides Tattoo's Instagram page is by far their largest account with more than 60,000 followers which is four times more than both Twitter and Facebook combined (9,000 and 7,700 respectively). Their Instagram is their main focus when it comes to social media as that is the platform they use the most often and update the most, not daily but almost daily. They post pictures of everything from the tattoos they've done (Appendix H) to action shots of tattoo artists tattooing (Appendix I), to just drawings/paintings some of the artist's work on (Appendix J), to photos of the merchandise they sell (Appendix K), and pictures of them out having fun. things around them in Japan they think are cool (Appendix L). On each post they have the name of the artist in the picture with a link to their Instagram (e.g. @insert artist handle here), then a bunch of hashtags

ranging from the name of the parlor to which location and even if it was a Japanese inspired tattoo, and some emojis too.

The last shop we looked at and was ultimately our focus for our case study was Hammersmith Tattoo in London. We talked to Alex Roze, who was one of the artists and was assumed to be the team member in charge of the shop's social media accounts. Alex told us that although the shops website displayed several different social media platforms, they decided to focus on Facebook and Instagram as the main way to get their shop out into a social community (Alex Roze, personal communication, March 13th, 2018). Alex continued to tell us that the reason they only focus on Instagram and Facebook is because it's the most popular among their target market that they are trying to reach, which is about 18-24-year-old people who like tattoos or body modifications. Alex continued to tell us that social media has made bonding with potential customers easy and there is a development of trust between artist and client (Alex Roze, personal communication, March 13th, 2018). He continued to tell us that they strictly use social media to broadcast their mission statement to people, which is ultimately to create quality tattoos. They do not use social media to promote any flash sales or "promotions", however Alex told us that they do use Facebook and Instagram to promote cancellations to attempt to get another client to take the place of the cancelled client (Alex Roze, personal communication, March 13th, 2018). Alex also disclosed that a lot of the shops customers are "tattoo tourists" looking to get inked from abroad. We asked if he and the shop had any plans to increase their use of social media to either create merchandise for the store, or use it as a way to reach out to other artists on a possible collaboration, but Alex told us that they plan to keep their social media simple since if any potential client would be in the area and

looking to get a tattoo, Facebook and Instagram would be the first places they would look after Googling "Tattoo Shops in London". (Alex Roze, personal communication, March 13th, 2018)

Tattoo parlors, regardless of location, utilize social media for promotional and advertising purposes. Hammersmith and Black Garden in London, Elm Street in Texas, and Three Tides in Japan all use similar social platforms and use similar strategies on these platforms. All these shops promote their artists by tagging them in pictures posted featuring their work, they all provide contact information for the shops in their posts, they post about conventions they will be attending, and they all try to post as frequently as they can to keep people interested and to make it easier for potential clients to find them. Despite these similarities, we found that they also use social media differently as well. For example, Three Tides has a lot of merchandise that they sell so they post about that on their social media, Elm Street not only does tattoos, but they also have microblading services available which they advertise on social media, Hammersmith promotes about any cancelations they have which encourages more walk ins, and Black Garden doesn't really use social media beyond their aforementioned uses which highlights how different tattoo shops, despite being in the same industry, use social media differently from one another. Hammersmith Tattoo will continue to use social media the way they have been as they feel that it is simple and if a potential client is in the area looking for a tattoo, they want their social media to be one of the first results, so people can see their work and hopefully go to them for a tattoo.

Appendix A



Appendix B



Appendix C



Appendix E



Appendix D



Appendix E



Elm Street Tattoo posted 2 photos.

April 1 at 3:19pm · Instagram · 🌐

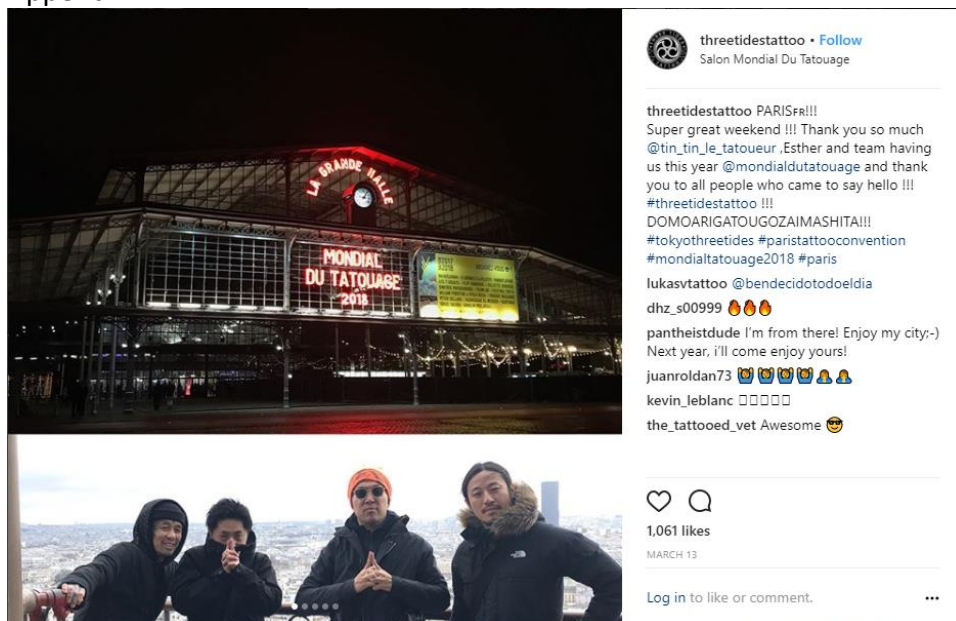
Repost from @ursula_hih - The last brow I did before my weekend off.
Swipe for the before !

Contact for appointments at ursulawizard@gmail.com or check out her
website at www.ursulathomson.com

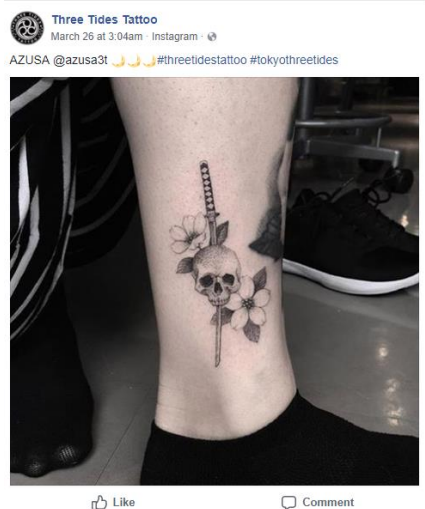
#elmstreetattoo #dallastattoo #2146531392 #heartinhandgallery
#tattoospeakeasy #heartinhand #deepellum #deepellumtattoo #deepellumart
#brows #microblading #microbladingeyebrows #dfwmicroblading
#dallasmicroblading #permanentmakeup #pmu #brows #browsonfleek @
Heart in Hand Gallery



Appendix F



Appendix G



Appendix H



Appendix I



Appendix J



Appendix K



threetidestattoo • Follow
Three Tides Tattoo

threetidestattoo HORIHIRO MANEKINEKO
@horihiro_mitomo_ukiyo aka
@horihiro_mitomo JPS Gallery exclusive
model will be available on @bbcbjps
HONGKONG !!! Stay tuned!! 🐱🐱🐱
🔥🔥 #jpsgallery #bbcbjps #secret base
@hiddy728 #threetidestattoo
#tokyothreetides #japanesetattoo
#japanesestyle #ukiyo #manekineko
#luckycat
#招き猫 #cat #猫 #hongkong #香港
langonej Can't wait!
horifudo_loyaltytattoo @vinnybny
seppukutattoo Thes@onejMj rule!
tao_adu How about for international
buyers? Love the look!
soogood @christinegiannetti omggg
faty_kang 🥰🥰🥰



1,147 likes

JANUARY 8

Log in to like or comment.

Appendix L



threetidestattoo • Follow
今宮戎神社

threetidestattoo 今宮戎 今年もどうぞ
よろしくお願いいたします。#三巴彫 #今宮戎 #
えべっさん #threetidestattoo
#tokyothreetides #japanesetattoo
#japanesestyle #商売繁盛
straight_to_hell_floam_sleep その下はブライア
ン・セツア
papas_sword_fish How do I make an
appointment with Ganji in May?



1,442 likes

JANUARY 11

Log in to like or comment.

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