

What Instagram Star Louise Delage Can Teach You About Marketing

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Meet Louise Delage. She's the girl women want to be and men want to be with. She's beautiful, charming, outgoing and mysterious. Louise Delage seems like the perfect girl, but does anyone really know who she is?

Louise Delage [appeared on the Instagram scene](#) on Aug. 1 of this year and quickly became a social media star of sorts. She almost immediately racked up [thousands of followers](#) and earned more than 50,000 likes in a matter of weeks.

Many people who have been on Instagram for years are still trying to get more than 40 or 50 likes (if that) on a single post. So it's not just that Louise Delage's smiling face draws us in -- we're also a bit jealous. How did she launch an Instagram account and go from a nobody to a somebody in just a few days?

Well, she had some help. A lot of help, it seems.

See, the 25-year-old Instagram star is actually a fictional character at the heart of an ad campaign from Paris agency [BETC](#). The campaign, called "Like My Addiction," sought to raise awareness of alcoholism among young people.

What the vast majority of Louise Delage's followers didn't realize -- until BETC uploaded a video explaining the situation to YouTube last week -- was that something was always at the center of her pictures. From weekend yachting and midnight partying to cafe lunches and lazy evenings at home, she usually had a drink in her hand. In fact, there are few images of her without a drink.

<https://youtu.be/ecRhesITlwE>

"We were briefed on the difficulty of detecting the addiction of someone close to you -- a friend, a child or a parent," BETC president [Stéphane Xiberras told Adweek](#). "We thought an interesting way of showing it would be to create a person people would meet every day but whom we'd

never suspect of being an addict, by setting up a fake Instagram account.”

And while the concept of addiction, and the very real struggles that can go undetected, are certainly most important and noteworthy, there’s also a social media and marketing side to this campaign that should be discussed. How did BETC do it? Is there a recipe or formula for social media virality? Do campaigns like these erode the trust of consumers?

There are quite a few takeaways for marketers and entrepreneurs seeking to learn more about the science of “going viral.” Let’s take a look at a few interesting concepts:

1. There are four key pillars to visibility.

Ever wondered what it takes to make something or someone go viral on social media? According to Xiberras, it’s as simple as 1-2-3-4. “We rooted our craft into native Instagram content and user habits, building an acquisition strategy around four pillars: content, hashtags, bots and a KOL [key opinion leader] strategy.”

Specifically, Xiberras and his team posted three times per day -- once in the morning, once at lunchtime and once late at night. These are all high-traffic moments when users are browsing profiles and looking for new people to follow.

Since Louise Delage was supposed to be very chic and fashionable, the team studied what successful fashion bloggers and industry figures were doing and tried to mimic their attitudes, filters and hashtags. To instantly provide a boost to every post, 20-plus [hashtags](#) were included.

Then came the bots, which had a huge impact on the growth of the profile. The team set up a bot to follow very specific accounts -- fashion bloggers, journalists, women with similar interests and even celebrities. While many of today’s social media “stars” are forced to follow thousands of people in order to gain followers, Louise Delage quickly amassed 16,000-plus followers while only following 3,000-plus. That’s an excellent ratio, one that led people to believe that she was someone worth following.

The final pillar [was a KOL strategy](#). BETC targeted between 20,000 and 100,000 influencers and teenage opinion leaders, hoping to spread the word about the account and gain inroads into valuable social circles.

2. Natural and organic posts are hard to feign.

It’s hard to trick people into thinking something is real. (Though “trick” may not be the best word in this scenario. BETC always intended to reveal the truth at the right moment.) Whether content comes in the form of a movie, TV show or book, it’s challenging to get an audience to suspend its disbelief.

Yet the Louise Delage experiment managed to pull it off. Besides a few incredulous journalists who sensed that something was “off,” Xiberras noted that “the majority just saw a pretty young

girl of her time and not at all a kind of lonely girl, who is actually not all that happy and with a serious alcohol problem.”

From a marketing perspective, notice the diversity of content posted to the account. Also, check out the use of [emoji](#), trending hashtags and interaction with followers. All are very important to looking natural. In order to develop organic content, you must remove yourself from the mind of a marketer and instead think in terms of your everyday life. What do people connect with and how can you reach them?

3. The big reveal is critically important.

One interesting thing to think about is whether or not campaigns like these erode the trust of social media users. In other words, does the fact that users were duped into believing Louise Delage was a real person cheapen the utility of social networks like Instagram? Well, in this case, no.

The key to this campaign was the big reveal. If Xiberras and his team would have waited until somebody called them out, then it would have been a failure. If they would have simply sent out a picture saying “Got you!” it also would have been a failure.

The way in which the big reveal was presented made all the difference. The campaign lasted just two months, and then the agency shared an engaging and tasteful video -- not to make people look foolish, but to raise awareness for the campaign’s cause.

Focusing on what really matters.

It would be a shame not to reiterate the real purpose of the “Like My Addiction” campaign. While it’s fun and interesting to discuss the marketing techniques used, remember what Louise Delage represents.

“Hopefully the campaign has served as an eye-opener for some,” Xiberras said. “I hope they will contact [Addict Aide](#) or other local organizations working to help people struggling with addiction.”

Scared that you might miss addiction in someone close to you? “Sometimes,” Xiberras said, “it seems like, in this era, the more people stage their ideal life on social media, the more that serves to hide a not-so-ideal reality.”

Once again, a campaign like this serves to remind us of the power and influence that social media platforms such as Instagram have in our society. As a marketer, you can and should leverage the resources and tools that you have at your disposal. Keep these lessons in mind and stop replicating what others are doing. Instead, strive to do something unique.

Image credit: [louise.delage | Instagram](#)

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