



## SOCIAL MEDIA CURATION: How *Manifesto Café* Used Deep Branding to Create Community & Profits

### A Geyen + del Campo Case Study

*“The sourcing of Manifesto’s products is admirable, but not hugely rare: cafes across the country have taken similar, admirable measures to offer better products that feed into an overall culture of environmental sustainability. What sets Manifesto apart is the owners’ willingness to go a step further: to*

*cultivate an environment of employee enrichment and sustainability.” - Forked: A New Standard for American Dining*

#### Executive Summary

Social enterprise *Manifesto Café* set out to be one of the most popular ethical coffee shops in Los Angeles. With a unique infrastructure that included key strategic partnerships with renowned not-for-profit organizations and popular *influencers* from the foodie community, *Manifesto Café* quickly became a local destination that attracted diverse crowds and thus, challenged the roles of neighborhood coffee shops in the communities they serve.

Because of their commitment in creating strong customer relationships coupled with a sincere dedication for fine cuisine, *Manifesto* converted their loyal clientele into advocates that promoted their brand beyond the life of the business.

- **10 Fair Trade Coffee Shops in LA**, The Good Trade - listed
- Nominated for the **2015 MakeChange Awards – “Happy Place to Work For”** on behalf of HappyCity, Conscious Capitalism, Net Impact, and the Social Enterprise Alliance

## Challenges

*Manifesto Café* excited the community with promises of change – “*We’re trying to send a message that we’re going beyond being a coffee shop. We’re not just a coffee shop, we’re a place for civic engagement. We’re a space for community gathering.*”

*Manifesto*’s success hinged on its ability to connect to its customers in profound ways; but the founders realized that in order to attract and retain customers, their branding had to activate pathways to keep customers engaged – even as the neighborhood itself struggled to adjust to changing demographics and a growing resentment among residents for the overall deficit of investment and opportunity in the area.

The notion of an ethically-driven café was not yet a proven business model. And historically moderate profit margins in the industry put the café at risk of inheriting the same outcome that previous businesses experienced in and of surrounding areas.

The challenge with any integration of cause-based marketing into territories not yet familiar, is the balance of maximizing profits without disorientating or alienating customers from the underlying mission (or in *Manifesto*’s case, their manifesto) that they bought into.

*“We knew from the start that we would need a strong social media campaign to connect with our customers. Our location is in the middle of nowhere. There’s low foot traffic. The best way to find our customers is online.”* – Jerome Scott, partner & architect; Togawa Smith Martin, Inc.

## Campaigns

### Step #1. Branding and Compelling Content

Tapping into the “foodie” culture of Los Angeles proved to be a vital resource for the launch of an extensive content marketing plan. Visually-compelling, rich content was regularly released through *Manifesto*’s actively managed Instagram account – giving food-centric customers an intimate view of the café through a narrative of candid photos, video, and thoughtful visuals.

A branded Instagram account allowed the café to show signature dishes in unique and aesthetic ways. One popular promotion exhibited a smoothie drink in a mason jar, perfectly nestled in the middle of a tree-lined street.

The business also found success leveraging the popular social media platform for initiating interactive promotional campaigns and direct feedback from customers.

One such strategy targeted customers who had “tagged” the Café in photos. A comment was left on their account, to the corresponding photo, offering them a discount when they brought a friend for their next visit.

It was these personal “touches” that helped *Manifesto Café* establish deeper customer relationships.

### Step #2. The Formidable Facebook

While audiences were targeted directly on Instagram through the creation and utilization of intuitive hashtags, posts made to their Facebook page

allowed for call-to-actions, content sharing, and visually-intensive graphics as a means to connect with customers in impactful ways.

The branded Facebook page proved an effective platform to attract partnerships, interact with vendors, and respond to customer inquiries. Additionally, the program's "Insights" offered useful data for monitoring campaigns and their results – which could then be modified accordingly.

### Step #3. Delving into the Deep

*"Activity extends the experience."* – Hassan del Campo, Geyen + del Campo

*Manifesto Café* identified the goal of becoming a destination; existing as a community space for local residents as well as a virtual venue where art meets community (and food).

A heavily curated event calendar gave rise to complimentary media pages that literally brought the café to the world stage. Numerous café events were recorded or live streamed. Poetry nights at the café were promoted through a dedicated Tumblr page. A similar spinoff blog was created to promote pop-up dinners, while singer/songwriter nights were recorded and uploaded to a branded Youtube Channel and Sound Cloud page.

Lastly, cobranding with local artists, organizations, and vendors gave the final push to create a true sense of community, *unidad* (unity), and "social good".

## Results

*"I think what put us over in a positive way, above our competitors, is that our customers totally bought into who we were. They appreciated having that transparency."* – Jerome Scott

Metrics from Square demonstrated positive sales growth between 30 and 65% across monthly sales cycles. The targeted social media marketing campaigns also worked in tandem with the café's outside catering activities, which also came as a recommendation from our consultants.

As *Manifesto Café* grew into other territories, their social media campaigns and branding extended the life of the business and continued customer relationships in ways its partners had not imagined

The *Manifesto* brand demonstrates the efficacy of building deep customer relationships through consistent and purposeful marketing efforts. If the language of today's customer is content marketing, then the dialogue is curated through the vessel of digital platforms.

*"Finally, our neighborhood is complete. Manifesto, we've been waiting for you! Since it's opening, my husband and I can't get enough of this place. The décor and vibe of the café is warm and welcoming. The food is phenomenal. Christina, the owner, and her staff are always so helpful. ...Thank you Manifesto, you've made our world a better place to live in." - Yelp*