

Maya's Market Café Finds a Healthier Balance

Meet Maya, proud owner of Maya's Market Cafe, a cozy shop known for its homemade muffins and friendly service. When Maya first opened her cafe, she enthusiastically created social media pages to help spread the word. She snapped photos of latte art for Instagram, posted daily lunch specials on Facebook, and even dabbled in X (formerly Twitter) to chat with her customers,



In the beginning it was exciting, and customers from the neighbourhood loved seeing updates from their local cafe. But as her business grew, so did the demands on her time.

Maya found herself waking up at 5 am to start baking, running the cafe all day, and then staying up late to answer comments and brainstorm the next day's posts. Social media started to feel like a never ending obligation. She was exhausted and noticed the quality of her posts (and her mood) declining. Maya knew she was burning out when one evening she caught herself dreading taking a photo of the beautiful new dessert she'd made – she just couldn't summon the energy for one more post.

Instead of quitting social media altogether, Maya decided to make a change. She signed up for a local workshop on digital marketing for small businesses. In that friendly one-day workshop, she learned she wasn't alone – many local entrepreneurs were struggling with the same social media stress. The instructor shared tips about using scheduling tools and planning content ahead (who knew you could schedule Instagram posts?!). Excited by the possibilities, Maya went home and immediately put some new practices in place.

She designated Wednesday afternoons (when the cafe was closed early) as her content batch-and-schedule time. She would cozy up in a corner of her cafe with her laptop and spend two hours planning and scheduling a week's worth of posts. Maya also decided to focus on Instagram and Facebook only – those were the platforms most of her customers followed. She stopped worrying about X and TikTok entirely. This was a huge relief, allowing her to concentrate on doing two platforms well instead of juggling five poorly.

Maya also worked with a local business coach (through a small business mentoring program in her region) who helped her develop healthier boundaries. Together, they set some rules: The cafe's social media would have "office hours." Maya updated her Facebook page info to say she responds to messages between 8am and 6pm, and she turned off notifications on her phone after dinner. No more pinging alerts while she was spending time with her family in the evening. The coach also helped Maya see that it's ok to take a day off social media. Maya started taking Sundays offline – she would schedule a fun "Sunday brunch special" post in advance, but she herself took the day to rest and recharge, trusting that online inquires could wait 24 hours.

The changes has an almost immediate positive effect. With her new tools and habits, Maya felt back in control of her marketing. Instead of scrambling every day, she found joy in planning cute posts (like #MuffinMonday spotlights) during her Wednesday sessions. Using a scheduling tool, those posts went out automatically while Maya was busy frothing milk and greeting customers.

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She even started to enjoy watching the likes roll in while she focused on the in-person cafe experience. Her content quality improved now that it wasn't created under last-minute stress. Customers online began commenting how much they loved the consistent updates and delicious photos. And if someone sent a message at 9pm on a Friday, they got a friendly auto-reply that Maya's Market Cafe would get back to them the next morning – which they did, promptly at 8am Saturday. No one complained about the wait; in fact, followers respected the clear business hours.

Maya's newfound balance also let to tangible business benefits. By attending the workshop and connecting with other entrepreneurs, she gained a small support network to swap ideas and even cross-promote each other occasionally (less content she had to create alone!). Her engagement on posts went up because she was posting more intentionally, and foot traffic on muffin Mondays increased thanks to those scheduled posts reminding folks to drop by.

Most importantly, Maya felt happier. She had evenings back to herself, more energy in the mornings, and far less anxiety. "I actually look forward to doing social media now," she says with a smile, "because it not longer runs my life, I run it." Maya's Market Cafe is thriving both offline and online, proving that you can use social media as a small business owner and still get a good night's sleep.



Disclaimer:

This case study is a fictional example created for educational purposes for Community Futures Lambton. It is intended to reflect the real experiences of many small business owners. With a few adjustments, you too can turn things around just like Maya did.