

[Year]

# Content Portfolio

SOME OF THE BLOGS WRITTEN DURING MY TIME FREELANCE  
CONTENT WRITING ASIDE OF STUDYING  
2017-2020

## **Best Kept Secrets About Women's Gym Leggings**

Yes, believe it or not there's things you may not know, may not have noticed or may never have realised about your gym leggings; but, don't worry, we're here to put you in the loop.

### **They're comfortable**

Perhaps, this one was once the best kept secret of them all. But, it's now being shared with the whole world. Gym leggings can be the best comfort go-to a girl can have. To make sure they're the comfiest they can it's best you ensure you're buying some that are made with shape retaining fabrics and compression technology; this will keep the blood flowing in your legs whilst the fabric acts as a second skin.

### **There's no shame in wearing them even when you're not going to the gym**

There was once a time when walking about in your gym clothes either got you labelled lazy or scruffy. However, times are changing! Active wear is the new chic, gym leggings can be a part of your everyday wardrobe, they can be co-ordinated outfits that get you standing out for the best reasons!

### **There's ways around being conscious of VPL**

Wearing a piece of clothing that fits as close and snug as gym leggings has it pros from better circulation to being able to show off that curvy figure you've been working hard on perfecting. However, there's always that one big issue all women can be conscious about when they're deciding what leggings to put on that day: VPL. Good quality leggings should help ensuring this isn't an issue but, sometimes, even the best leggings can't save you from this. So, what do you do then? The answer: tank tops and t-shirts. It's as simple as, purchasing gym tops that are that bit longer to cover all!

### **Your choice says a lot about you**

So, now you're getting your gym leggings noticed for all the right reasons it means that people are probably going to make some inferences about the choices you make. From matching a pair of dark coloured gym leggings with a bright top, going all black or modelling a neon co-ord let your outfit speak for you. Luckily, there's many options to choose from to ensure your style is spoken through your leggings.

### **They don't have to match the rest of your outfit**

Despite the pressure of keeping your gym wear chic it's completely okay for you to match them high quality gym leggings with a cute oversized t-shirt. We are in an age of individuality and that doesn't stop with your gym-wear. Njorun offer many variations of women's gym leggings for this exact reason; to suit you.

But don't just take my word for it. Get yourself a pair of gym leggings that let these secrets slip and enjoy the comfort of stepping out and owning your gym look.

## How To Eat Clean With A Busy Lifestyle

Eating clean and staying healthy takes dedication and hard work. Fast food is becoming more and more accessible with drive-thru and deliveries, and it can often seem like the only option for fitting meals into a busy schedule. As work piles up and as life starts to get in the way healthy eating falls further and further down the priorities list. To stop this from being the case, we've narrowed down a few tips that we think will help those busy go-getters keep their diet as clean and tidy as their schedules.

The cliché, but extremely important, **don't skip breakfast**. Waking up to that pre-dawn alarm screaming in your ear certainly isn't the way to get your mind started in the positive setting it needs to be in for the busy day ahead. Taking time each morning to sit and eat a breakfast meal will not only give you more time to wake up it will ensure your sugar levels are right where you need them to be for your mind to stay focused and able to work hard for the rest of the day.

**Keep drinking water.** It's far too easy to reach for the caffeinated beverages that you think will ply you with the energy you necessary to get through the day. However, health experts have linked coffee with increased stress hormones, which will not only help everyday feel like a Monday it could also have negative effects on your digestive system. Not only this, the caffeine could disturb your sleeping pattern which will have a negative domino effect as you tell yourself you need them extra calories to feel a bit more awake the next day.

You've got every meeting, phone call and event written in permanent ink in your diary and we suggest it's time that meal slots are treated the same. **Making time to eat** is important to provide the correct nutrients and vitamins to keep your body working, your immune system intact and your energy levels correct for you to face the day. Having set meal times that are the same each day has also been proven to have its own health benefits you become very aware of when and what you're eating and the necessity for snacking becomes less apparent. However, if you find yourself sat in your office with your mind wandering to the thought of snacks then make sure you're **substituting those chocolate and crisps for fruit and granola**.

Now we've discussed the 'when' it's important to think about the 'what' of clean eating. I'm sure nothing seems simpler at lunch than to nip and get a local meal deal; cheap and easy. However, we suggest **meal prepping** on weekends or evenings will ensure you're sticking to healthy foods and will even save you extra time on your dinner hour. There's a lot of recipes online for tasty, healthy meals that can be stored in plastic containers and reheated for safe consumption. It goes without saying, however, that professionals will often be expected to eat out with clients or for meetings. This is where will power must kick in and remember it may be all well and good that your client is paying the bill but that no longer means you need to buy the biggest, most expensive steak on the menu. Remember to **choose the healthy option**; salads, fish, vegetables, as difficult as it may be.

Social media is often used to fill the sparse spare minutes of a busy person's day, giving them thumbs a bit of exercise as you quickly catch up on how everyone else is spending their day. We suggest that by **following health accounts** it means your mind is staying focused on just why you're putting effort into that clean eating rather than being distracted. **Motivation is always key** and a tired mind will often need little reminders of why sticking to a regime is for the best.

Therefore, you really don't have to be left at a disadvantage with your health goals because you're drowning in work commitments or because adult-ing is all a bit much. A little thought and preparation will keep you on track.



## **10 Fitness Myths You Might Have Fallen For**

Whether you're new on the health and fitness band wagon or a long term gym go-er we can guarantee you'll have fell for one of these common myths!

### **Protein bars are meal substitutions**

False. Many diets suggest that this is a good thing to help cut calories, but just because many are doing it doesn't make it right. Most bars have excessive amounts of sugar and chemicals. The best way to get yourself more protein is through whole foods.

### **The more you sweat the more fat you'll lose**

False. If you're sweating, it's just because you're hot! Human sweat is the body's mechanism to cool itself down. The harder the workout is, the hotter we get which, ultimately, means the more we sweat. Fluid loss will result in some weight loss, but this isn't the same as fat loss. We are also advised to spend a lot of time after the workout replacing this fluid by rehydrating!

### **Rest days are bad**

False. Although working out more than once or twice a week is necessary for an effect on the body, overtraining is a thing! Doing too much exercise can result in sleeping troubles, mood problems and exhaustion. Rest days need to be in place for repairing any muscle tears and for fitting the rest of life in.

### **You can focus on losing fat from certain part of the body**

False. The only way to lose weight where you specifically want to is through regular exercise and healthy eating as this means your entire body is getting fit and healthy. You can, however, focus which areas you want to improve your muscle definition.

### **Weight training is for men**

False. This is a myth that can often knock female confidence and stop them from taking a wander over to the weights in the gym; worries of bulking too much or appearing too manly get in the way. Weight lifting is something to be done with caution and the correct technique, but it is for everyone. Lifting weights can have a lot of benefits from toning, aiding weight loss and growing strength.

### **If you're not sore you haven't worked hard enough**

False. Training at high intensity can be necessary, but that doesn't mean you have to be in pain. Pain is your body's way of warning you. Aching muscles need time to rest and repair in order to avoid any long term problems.

### **Carbs are bad for you**

False, kind of. Too much of anything can be bad for you, this isn't just carbs. The best type of diet is one that is well balanced and includes the right amount of everything. Carbs are important in a diet as the body's source of energy, too much can result in weight gain and problems, but that's the same with other types of food groups.

### **Best time to work out is on a morning**

False. The best time to work out is the best time for you. Yes, working out in the morning can have many positives but it isn't proven it's any better for you or that more calories are burnt exercising at this time.

**Sit ups are the best way to get abs**

False. Don't worry, we were shocked too. As we said before, focusing in on a certain part of the body is difficult and can only be done with regular exercise and healthy eating. Following this, it's important to strengthen the core of your body and focus on compound exercises.

**Yoga isn't a real workout**

Absolutely false. Admittedly, there's very little cardio involved but yoga works on the body's flexibility, strength and can be the core of a good fitness regime.

## **The Ultimate Glossary of Terms About Women's Gym Leggings**

So, you've decided to invest in a good pair of gym leggings because you know having the best tools is always going to help get the best results. However, as you're sat browsing the Njorun website you're met with descriptions and phrases that are making the experience more daunting than you thought. But, fear not! We have collected some of the more technical terms and put them together to help you understand exactly what you're buying.

### **Full Shape Retention**

There's nothing worse than spending money on a pair of leggings for them to become baggy in all the wrong places. Full shape retention ensures that the fabric will hug to the natural curve to your skin and always bounce back to its original shape; it is usually one of the features that defines and separates a quality pair of leggings from the rest.

### **Performance Fabrication**

This means that the materials the leggings are made from have been chosen specifically to ensure that they assist any activities you partake in whilst wearing them. They are usually highly durable fabrics that can withstand a hard workout in any conditions.

### **Sweat Absorbing**

When you're in the gym, putting the effort in and burning the calories it also means you'll be working up a sweat. For some people, this can be a lot more excessive than for others and can often be a concern that can put them off the gym; we all want that slight glow but we don't want the drowned look. Sweat absorbing materials assist in making sure this doesn't have to be a problem. The material traps the sweat before it can reach the outer parts of the material – meaning no more sweat marks!

### **Moisture Wicking**

This feature is similar to sweat absorbing but, instead, takes it to a whole new level. Rather than keeping the sweat in the fabric, moisture wicking materials pick up the moisture that comes from your skin and carries it to be evaporated from the outside of the material – clever ey!

### **Compression Technology**

Compression clothing means that the material becomes an almost second skin in its tight fitting. However, it isn't a tight fit in a way that reduces movement, instead they provide support and ensure that you get the best movement possible. The compression technology improves your body's circulation; keeping the blood flowing and helping prevent health issues. Other perks include the prevention of chafing, something we can all be happy about!

### **Flatlocked Seams**

Flatlocked seams refers to the stitching that the leggings are made with, something that may not seem too important when deciding which pair that you're going to purchase. However, every detail counts. Flat seams, especially when used in the parts of clothing that will get the most movement, will ensure that the right support is there but keeps your leggings lasting much longer – saving money and improving quality!

Don't be letting these multi-syllable, complex looking words fool you, they're just more and more reasons why you **should** purchase a pair of our brilliant gym leggings. More goes into creating Njorun's gym leggings that just pretty colours and how they look; the science behind each pair is to help create a piece of clothing which has every aspect and detail of it working towards a substantial and successful work out.

## **What the Oxford English Dictionary Doesn't Tell You About Women's Gym Leggings**

The English dictionary defines 'leggings':

1. 'Tight-fitting stretch trousers, typically worn by women or girls'
2. 'Strong protective over garments for the legs' However here, at Njorun, we think they're so much more.

### **Relaxed**

This may be a bit of a 'duh' moment, but if there's one thing gym leggings should always be defined as it is comfortable, something the dictionary leaves out completely. Jeans can be great but they definitely don't provide the comfort or support that gym leggings do. Feeling relaxed brings about all kinds of good things, lower stress levels is a happy life, so even something as small as switching the denim for that shape retaining fabric can do nothing but good.

### **Confidence**

There may not be statistics to back it up but I think we all know that when you feel comfortable it's so much easier to feel confident, and what's comfier than the perfect pair of gym leggings? We believe that the right pair of gym leggings can be a brilliant source of a woman's confidence. With celebrities, social media and all types of new airbrushing technology it isn't easy to manage or consolidate self-esteem today and so finding a piece of clothing that highlights the beautiful, natural shape of your body can only lead to body positivity!

### **Productivity**

It's no new concept to 'dress for the occasion' but this is well and truly being overtook by dressing for purpose. Gym clothing exerts a mood and appearance that you're dressed ready to achieve something today; be it a high intensity work out, ticking off your to-do list or even just leaving the house. Gym leggings not only give the woman wearing them the ease to achieve they also just allow her to appear more productive on those days where effort isn't coming easily.

### **Motivation**

Staying dedicated to a fitness regime isn't easy. Sometimes it's much easier to convince yourself that that walk to the car or to the corner shop is sufficient exercise for the day. Yet, when you easily put on that perfect set of gym leggings – half the battle is done. You're already dressed and ready to go, you may as well make the washing load worth it! Dressing the part will keep you motivated to get out the house and get to the gym, a professional always needs the correct tools, even down to the uniform.

### **Positivity**

The array of patterns, styles and colours when choosing gym leggings are more than enough to brighten up your day. It's been a popular strand of psychology proving that colours have an effect on our moods and emotions, so filling up the wardrobe with bright, warm reds, pinks and yellows etc. will bring nothing but positivity; the clashing excused by its 'gym' purpose.

### **Fashionable**

It's no longer any type of fashion faux pas to be going about your normal day to day business in your gym clothes, in fact as trend has it these days, it puts you on the fashion radar. Gym leggings are no longer just what you wear to work out, they're a way of life. Putting on a quality pair no longer makes you stand out for dressing lazily, instead it makes you stand out for looking good! Women are wearing them to shop, to go out to eat, even to work.



The academics know what they're talking about but their dictionary definition of women's gym leggings leaves so much out. The right pair can alter the way people see and feel about gym wear and can get a girl looking happy and on trend.

## **Top 10 Tips To Keeping Fit At Home**

The life of the average 2017 civilian is go, go, go and busy, busy, busy. You're expected to carefully balance work, social events, family and friends, as well as staying healthy and keeping fit, all of which is usually pretty complicated. We're here to help make the latter a bit easier for those busy women out there by helping you keep fit easily in the comfort of your own home.

### **Fitness DVDs**

A cheaper and much less time consuming substitute for a gym class and luckily for you Fitness DVDs are now in abundance as every celebrity wants to share their magical routine of fitness. With a bit of research, it should be very easy to find the best one for you that uses up just the right amount of time you have spare.

### **YouTube Videos**

Not much different but they're even cheaper than fitness DVDs, YouTube offers an array of fitness videos. Social media is truly a beautiful thing and you can find many trainers, celebrities and experts who are more than willing to upload the perfect set of home workouts.

### **Exercise Equipment**

It seems obvious, but, investing in your own equipment, will definitely save you time. Treadmills, cross trainers, kettlebells and weights are all easily accessible from sport shops ranging in price and style to fit your home perfectly. Having the equipment so easily accessible will be much more motivational as you don't have that extra pain of having to take yourself out to the gym. The fact you've paid for it will most likely be an extra push to wake up and start exercising right at home.

### **Taking the Stairs**

Why pay for equipment when your house is fitted with some? Fitness experts have worked out that, on average, taking a flight of stairs can burn 12 calories at a time. A bit of time spent working out on them and you've found yourself the ultimate home exercise.

### **Clean eating**

The side of fitness that often gets forgotten about is a healthy diet. Drinking plenty of water, including your 5-a-day and portioning your meals correctly can help your fitness levels massively. Eating the correct foods will help you to feel energised and it has been proven that it can give a much more positive mental outlook, setting you up for everything else in your busy schedule.

### **Stretching**

Ensuring that you're getting up from the sofa every now and then or from your office chair can have big health benefits by getting your muscles moving, increasing your blood flow and it will improve your posture. The little things really do make a difference.

### **Yoga**

Taking the idea of stretching to a whole new level is Yoga. This has become a much more popular form of exercise that can be done easily from your living room, and is often a peaceful exercise to start your day off. Yoga improves your flexibility, your muscle strength and helps maintain a balanced metabolism. Information on Yoga is easily accessible on the internet so the only thing you'd need to invest in to partake at home is your own mat!

### **Gardening**

Believe it or not just doing that mundane task of weeding your garden path can help work towards being fit, 30 mins of it can, on average, burn 182 calories. With all the lifting,

digging, mowing and planting gardening works them major muscles, gets your body stretching and you can even make sure the neighbours are envious of how on top of your garden you are.

### **Housework**

Yes unfortunately, for those who usually put them off, chores can be a great way of keeping fit at home. Mopping the floor, hoovering and dusting are all physical activity that if done strenuously could help work those muscles and keep you fit. It may not be the ideal gym alternative, but every little certainly helps in keeping fit.

### **Apps**

With the ever-changing smartphone and internet, technology has put accessible fitness information and regimes right at our fingertips. From *Nike Training Club* to *MYFITNESSPAL* there are plenty of free applications that help monitor your daily exercise. Monitoring how much (or even how little...eek) exercise you do in a day can be a real motivational push to keep on doing more.

## Craft Beer Blogs

### What Is Craft Beer?

If you've spent any time in a public house in the past couple of years (which I'm sure you will have) then I can bet you'll have heard the phrase 'craft beers' being thrown about or written up in chalk on their specials boards. The term has become more frequent in everyday lives. But, do we really know what a 'craft' beer is?

No, the phrase isn't quite literally what it suggests, we can all leave the glitter pens at home. The 'craft' part, however, does help to explain the precise and skilful brewing techniques used to make such beers. The dictionary definition of 'craft beer' is one "that is made in a traditional/non-mechanised way by a small brewery." The concept has allowed the opening and success of independent breweries who have managed to concoct their own recipes and flavours of beer.

The brewery world, however, find themselves in much debate about the actual definition of 'craft beer.' The concept was originally born in America and has made its way over to Europe and UK and is such a new idea that a definition has not, yet, been widely spread for as the phrase is so freshly coined. It seems to be agreed, however, that 'craft beers' are an innovative spin on an age-old favourite. With the brightly coloured patterned packaging they are often sold in, to the fresh fruity flavours and the tongue-twisting mind-boggling names given to them the breweries are well and truly 'crafting' an art out of alcoholic beverages. In a modern world full of colour, diversity and difference 'craft' breweries have formed the modern-day answer to beer, keeping it innovative and up to date.

One aspect of the 'craft' beer that holds importance is its locality. As the UK finds itself in an ever-changing economic state putting time and money into local businesses has become more and more important. As the demand for new-style beers grew this gave local, independent breweries a chance to start gaining attention and, ultimately, profit – especially since the 'Progressive Beer Duty' system was brought in in 2002. With the 'street food' era of food and drink, the gap in the market fell wide open for a beer that fits better with the Camden-esque, Saturday afternoon market jaunt and the 'craft beer' fits just the bill. A lot of these breweries are still just finding their ground, experimenting with production processes, flavours and packaging to create the right type of beer that's going to attract this new market. There has been no 'right' way agreed, which is most likely why no one is willing to form a definitive definition of what a 'craft beer' is. The 'craft beer' represents a type of beer that is inclusive, as soon as someone defines it, it then leaves room for discrimination on a 'wrong' way of crafting the beer.

So, what is a craft beer? It's a new style of beer, that allows local breweries to join the market. It's one that mixes an artisan creation with modern day individuality, to create a juxtaposition of old and new that tingles the taste buds of anyone who drinks them.

## **Why Craft Beer Is On The Rise In The Uk**

Craft beer has been up and coming for the past few years since the Progressive Beer Duty system meant smaller breweries could pay less tax. With more and more independent breweries appearing on the scene ready to add their own touch to the industry. But why are they so popular?

### **People like to experiment**

In the modern age of DIY, shabby chic and being 'Insta' worthy a new generation are constantly changing the traditional and making it fresh. So why should the beer industry be any different? The 'craft' beer is the edgy take on a traditional pint. In the new, much more competitive economic market breweries are having to work hard and innovatively to keep their customers interested; introducing new flavours, artistic packaging and trying to stand out.

Companies have quickly realised that, although there is still the market for normal beers and lagers, society are welcoming diversity and cultural differences in everyday life and in their fridge! It's now so much cooler to be different and favouring independent brands means a boost for your status as you step away from the 'overrated'.

### **An excuse to socialise**

Drinking craft beer has become a social situation; you're a part of something different if you choose to drink the craft beer as an alternative to the typical pub pint. It seems the 'craft' part makes an alcoholic beverage personal to its drinker and breweries are recognising their customers and beginning to form relationships with them. They're holding events like drinking festivals and opening taster rooms, they're giving customers opportunities to meet people and letting them bond over their love for newly provided products.

### **It's a lot more accessible**

You no longer have to go on a mission to find the individual taste of a craft beer. No, now you can find these canned, bottled and ready for you to drink from behind most bars, in a lot of supermarkets and even on websites just like ours! Being able to drink them from more than just the pump means that you're not restricted on *where* you can enjoy the taste of your favourite craft beer. This is helping craft beer lovers to keep the craze growing!

### **Changing market**

The beauty of the craft beer is there's no right or wrong. Breweries can follow their own creative paths on ingredients, methods and flavours and can only be excited about attracting and appealing new custom, rather than worrying about breaking tradition. The Craft Beer industry is part of a new concept where followers know they have to keep up with the ever-changing trends rather than being stuck in set ways.

### **They're not weak**

Craft beer mainly comes from small, independent breweries which means production is on a much smaller scale than mass market, popular brands. This also means that the alcohol levels are higher; with less need to water the beer down the ingredients are much more concentrated giving it a kick in both flavour and alcohol. Most craft beers range in about 510% abv, meaning less is definitely more – a beautiful phrase for your wallet to hear!

There is no doubt there will always be space for the traditional pint of beer in UK pubs but, with the rise in popularity for Craft Beer, it is unsafe to suggest they will always be favoured. Innovative times call for innovative measures; something which Craft breweries can supply. The UK have jumped straight onto this bandwagon and they certainly are enjoying the ride.

The Craft Beer market is only expanding and enticing more and more drinkers' attentions with their experimental ways, who knows how far they will go!

### **All You Need To Know About Beavertown**

#### **How were they formed?**

Beavertown are an American-style English brewery based in London. Their unique story started in 2011 with one man (Logan Plant) and his rice pan. They went on to move their business forward, opening a brewery within an American BBQ restaurant and creating a

special experience for their diners by serving up their crafted pints alongside their Texan themed food. The success they had with their “Brewpub” allowed them to start being creative, enterprising and expansive all of which aided them in becoming the success story they are today.

The company has experimented their craft beers from kegs, bottles and cans contrasting differences in flavour, freshness and ease of production for the satisfaction of their evergrowing fan base.

### **How many different craft beers do they brew?**

As their business endeavour has grown, so has their amount of beers. The 6 core beers are their go-to regulars; concoctions of bright, eye-catching art, fruity flavours and meaningful names. So, don't be alarmed if you hear people talking about the ‘Gamma Ray’ or ‘Smog Rocket’ they're just joining the Beavertown bandwagon.

However, Beavertown don't just leave the choice there. There is, quite literally, a beer for any occasion: chocolate and gingerbread flavours for Christmas, spiced pumpkin for Halloween and even an espresso flavour just for them days where you may need that extra ‘pick me up.’

Beavertown even have a ‘collabs’ section for craft beers they've worked on with others to bring you innovative tastes. They've teamed up with breweries from all over the world including America, Denmark, Belgium and more, to keep jazzing up the tastes of their beers and keep the market on its toes.

### **Where can I get their beers from?**

London is the main hub for accessibility to Beavertown's stock but they certainly aren't the only ones. Beavertown have a mix of pubs and shops stocked with their craft beers all over the UK. But they haven't just stopped there...

Beavertown have begun to take mainland Europe by force, with their beers being sold in Amsterdam and Florence too.

Or if you're wanting to enjoy their craft beer from the comfort of your own sofa then you can head to their online shop stocked with beers, glassware and other pieces of merch for the super fans. They've even took it that step further, for those who can't quite manage to reach for the laptop you can now download the Beavertown app straight onto your smart phone.

### **What is The Beavertown Extravaganza?**

Beavertown Brewery have set up their own beer festival. Held in Printworks London the festival showcases up to 80 different craft beers from across the world. Logan, the brewery's founder describes the festival as a “celebration for the people who make the beer...and all about celebrating the drinker, the lover of beer.” With a successful start this year the Brewery have begun to sell tickets for their 2018 follow up.

The festival is stocked up with beer, street foods, beer makers, beer drinkers and a tangible air of beer love. It is a two- day ticketed event set up to recognise the rising love for craft beers all around the world.

### **What's the latest news?**

The biggest piece of news to hit the Beavertown brewery custom base is that they are shutting down ‘Duke's Brew and Que.’ This was the BBQ restaurant where the brewery's story first began.

## **Who are Alphabet Ale?**

Alphabet Ale are a small, independent brewery based in Manchester, their popularity and success is working to make Manchester stand out on the Craft Beer map. The brewery first opened in 2015 and has since progressed in making a name for itself; one that is recognisable in the ever-growing crowd of Craft breweries.

One way which they've managed to do this is through their 'Brew tap and food yard' event, 12-10pm every Saturday, right at their base in the heart of Manchester. Entry to the event is free, welcoming all (even furry friends on their leads) and allows customers access to taste their own original beers. The brewery teams their kegs up with some of the finest street food to give everyone the true taste of the craft world. Crowds gather in their fairy-lighted, beerkeller-esque set up to clunk pints and cheers to Alphabet Brewery's success in creating a true 'craft' experience for all to enjoy. Those who attend are often entertained with DJ's and music whilst a warm atmosphere is created as everyone is bonding and socialising with wants to celebrate the innovativeness of 'craft beer.'

Alphabet Ale recognised that the growingly competitive 'craft beer' market calls for as much originality as possible if a brand wants to stand out. Their answer to this problem? Coffee. The brewery formed its own 'breakfast stout' in the shape of their 'Flat White' beer but don't be fooled this same beer also jam packs 7.8% alcohol into its small can, it certainly is quite the wakeup call! Their core set of a beers experiment with differing flavours from fruity and tropical to oatmeal and milky; keeping people on their toes and trying a bit of something for everyone. These big-time favourites, however, don't stop Alphabet Brewery from stepping out of their comfort zone and creating one-off, limited editions and even collaborating with other companies.

The company's most recent endeavour is their new webshop which they put live this month. Customers can now order their favourite cans to the comfort of their own home and with next day delivery! They've even threw their branded snapback on there for all those avid superfans.

Alphabet Ale are constantly working to keep up with popular trends and to also set their own. They're most definitely a brewery to keep an eye on if you're wanting to get the best from the 'craft beer' scene or if you're just interested in trying something new! But don't just take our word for it, join them for one of their Saturday afternoon gatherings and get a taste for their kegged goods yourself!



## Made at Shape – Web Design Company

### Kylie Jenner's tweet about Snapchat sees stock value fall by \$1.3bn

There was international uproar when Snapchat dropped their new update at the end of February. The update saw a whole new makeover for the app; relocating some of the users favoured settings such as 'stories' and giving sponsored celebrity accounts their own page. The changes left many unsettled and unhappy, with many users taking to other social media platforms to speak out about their dislike for it. A petition was even formed on change.org.uk to 'Remove the Snapchat Update' with currently almost 1,250,000 signatures and counting.

One of the most noticeably unhappy figures was the highly influential, Kylie Jenner, who tweeted the following to her 24.7million followers:



Following this tweet Snapchat's stock value fell by \$1.3 billion. But, was it really because of Kylie Jenner?

Realistically, no. The app's stocks had already been downgraded by Wall Street the day before this tweet, from 'neutral' to 'sell,' which means that stock had already begun to fall beforehand. But there's no doubt that Kylie's tweet will have caught the company's attention due to her follower base, celebrity status and well-built relationship with the app. Which leads us to think about just how much celebrities and social media can influence the business world.

Social media has made marketing a whole new ball game. It's a useful tool for consumers to learn, share and add information about brands and products; which means competition is rife. Active users can now read online reviews and have access to much more knowledge and opinion prior to buying. Using celebrities in PR and advertising isn't a new concept, but with the increasing influence and use of social media, the effect of this has changed. The likes of Twitter and Instagram now allow celebrities to openly communicate with the public; it allows them to express their 'personal' opinions, give insights into their day-to-day lives and have more control over how much of their personal life the world can see. This then creates a more in-depth relationship between public and celebrity, closing the gap for fans but widening opportunity for a whole new aspect of advertising. Despite it not being the case with Snapchat, keeping celebrities on the right side of a business can now have a direct impact on sales.

This concept can be known as The Celebrity Effect; their position stands them as role models and advocates for general ideas about ethics, style and taste, therefore influencing customer choice. If a celebrity tells the world to use a site, buy a product or watch a show there's a large chance their follower base is going to listen. As Kylie Jenner's tweet demonstrates celebrity involvement with brands can be subtle, sometimes even unnoticeable, advertising. They grab an audience's attention and spark interest in a product.

However, as positive as celebrity endorsement can be it can also take a toll on a company. The ever-changing world of social media means that celebrities can be scrutinised as quick as they can be praised; if a company is in association with a celebrity who's acting against its principles and standards then this could have an impact on public interest, reputation and sales. As idolised as celebrities can be it's healthy to remember they're only human and a humane mistake can decrease business success.

The developing world of marketing and media means that there's no concrete system that works. As Snapchat's stock value reflects, business success can fluctuate and alter with no one sole reason. If anything, the influence of individuals such as Kylie Jenner and the realisation that 2018 is introducing a speed-light growth in social media use, should all teach companies the importance of the social media touch in generating interest and connecting with consumers. A positive online experience assists in accumulating business success.

## **Simple Steps To Improve Your Existing Website Without Redesign**

If you feel like your website needs a bit of an oomph adding to it but you don't quite want the costs that come with that then we've put together a few ideas on how to alter your already existing website for much cheaper! If you follow these tips your website will be revamped in no time.

### **Keep the design consistent**

A website can be instantly improved if the design is consistent throughout all of the webpages; this includes colour schemes, font sizes, typography and icons. This makes the site more accessible and makes the overall user experience much better. A theme will give a quick and clear impact to the user allowing them to see what your business is all about and will give the best first impressions imminently. The best typography are strong typefaces, it's usually best to have two styles that occur throughout the site. When it comes to colour, having a bright, saturated colour contrasting against the typical black and white can create a classy, modern design.

### **Keep it simple**

Minimalistic designs are the way forward. Research has showed that white space on a webpage can allow the mind more space to breathe whilst simplifying it. A visually complex website is one that has too many competing elements trying to attract user attention. By minimalizing the features of a website users can focus on the important aspects of your company and achieve the aim of their visit much quicker.

### **Alter meta data**

When it comes to your sites metadata it's important that it is kept concise and compelling to ensure it catches customers attention and helps increase site traffic. Keyword research will allow you to see what words need to be used to improve the websites SEO through the metadata and optimise the sites rankings.

### **Improve its written content**

The words on your site are just as important as the design in ensuring that users can easily access your company's aims and achieve their goals when using their website. Your site should be regularly updated with fresh, new content that will grip reader's attention, this will get customers to return and also works well with search engine optimisation. Regular content is good but lengthy content isn't, it's advised to keep pieces of writing on your site to approximately 500 words to keep reader interest and to look better on the page.

Regularly posting on your sites blog will improve it; it not only keeps the site further up to date but gives a forum for your users to interact with a space to comment or share. Having a blog gives your website more links to social media, increasing the sites outreach and more opportunity to catch users attention.

### **Improve the image content**

Your sites image content is just as important. Regularly updated, fresh images provide an altered page for returning users and also keep more content on your site up to date. If you manage to save enough of your budget by following our simple tips then you could use this to get your own photographer. If not, stock images are also a great option!

We hope we've showed you how small improvements to your website can make a big impact on your users. As long as your design decisions keep your target audience in mind these small changes can improve user accessibility and usage. Considering all of the above should increase your sites traffic and keep them customers coming back!

## **Google Chrome Now Has A New Built In Ad Blocker**

Google Chrome, one of the most popular web browsers, have introduced a new built in Ad Blocker to their software, which could work towards altering the world of digital advertising as the internet now knows it. The programme will now filter out ads that don't meet the regulations set out by 'Coalition for Better Ads'; stripping webpages, who utilise these types of adverts regularly, of ads completely. This will ensure that any form of intrusive, cheap traffic advertising i.e. pop ups, auto-play videos with sound or full-page ads, are stopped and will improve the web user's overall experience. Google will notify companies whose advertisements don't comply with these standards, giving them 30 days to make changes. If these changes are not made the ads will be blocked and the user will be notified that Google have done this for them.

'Coalition for Better Ads' are a company, made up of members such as Google and Facebook, who dedicate research into ensuring the marketing world can understand what consumers prefer and admire when it comes to online advertising. From this research they then set out standards for both desktop and mobile users which prioritise the experience of the web user. However, this won't just have an effect on the user, it will also encourage advertisers to clean-up their marketing.

In recent years, digital advertising has become dependent on page clicks and views rather than taking the time to produce content which will reach a target audience and form relationships with potential customers. Google's Ad Blocker will force the industry to make changes. To reach viewers now, companies will have to focus on a higher quality of trustworthy content in their advertisements and concentrate on forming and connecting with a loyal, more responsive audience. Otherwise, a large number of websites will lose revenue they earn from adverts. This also means that companies who were already doing so, but were being overshadowed by intrusive advertising techniques, will reap the benefits of the Ad Blocker straight away.

Despite Google being a company that earns a high amount of revenue from the use of adverts, the blocker will work in their favour, as it will also suppress and eliminate the need for third party Ad Blocker tools. These are usually much more aggressive in blocking all adverts, which usually causes altercations for Google. Also, it seems that the blocker may not have to be used on many websites, as the blocker changed the web before it was even implemented. Google's announcement of such a filter has already encouraged 42% of sites to edit their online advertisements.

The Ad Blocker went live with automatic updates on the 15<sup>th</sup> February. It's unpredictable just how much change this might bring to the world of online marketing, but it's a significant, positive improvement to prioritising user experience and bringing the focus of webpages back to quality content.

## **What is User Experience?**

User experience is a term often used in the technology industry. Here at Shape it's something that's constantly prioritised in any project that we take on, it's at the forefront of most technological advances and it's usually the reason we are constantly undergoing updates on any devices we use. But what does it actually mean?

### **Usability**

All websites, no matter what company they belong to, want to attract viewers and users. To do so, and to build an audience who wish to return to the page, they must ensure that they create a positive impression. This momentary impression that users have of the site will evolve; if they can easily use the site to achieve what they need without confusion there is a much higher chance they will return back to it. Good usability comes from easy-to-navigate links to a clear layout; all of which works together to give the user a positive experience.

### **Relevant**

Access to the content is important but it's crucial that, once they've successfully navigated their way around your website, users find the content of it useful. Keeping websites clear, concise and to the point effectively allows them to achieve their aims whilst using your webpage. If this isn't done websites can lose value and easily alters the relationship between business and user.

### **Good Advertising**

It's not surprising that most technology users dislike adverts, but sadly they are inevitable in our 21<sup>st</sup> century world. This means companies should be taking special thought when considering which advertisements they want to use on their websites, always considering how they can ensure their users get the best experience. The best online marketing campaigns are ones that align with the target audience of the website and are relevant to them, they should interrupt the flow of the website as little as possible and, ethically, should fit with the core values of the company that is being represented.

### **Pleasure**

We can umbrella all these concepts together to summarise how crucial it is that users enjoy their experience on your website. Providing people with an enjoyable experience, ensuring they can successfully achieve what they set out to and providing them with a nicely set up website all works towards making them happy. A happy customer base leaves a positive impression; meaning you can count on them coming back for more and recommending your site/business to others.

The term 'User Experience,' therefore, may seem simple but it holds different facets that must be considered when creating a website. It ensures that the audience is always prioritised, it reduces anything that may seem intrusive to users details and it doesn't interrupt the flow of individual's experience. Websites that successfully consider user experience in their formation can reap the benefits through the build-up of a loyal audience and will see positive results.

## **Total Excellence Blogs – A Business Training Company**

### **Leadership: The Importance of Getting it Right**

Being a leader within a business doesn't always require you to be a manager, leadership can be important throughout the whole organisation's hierarchy. This means that getting it wrong can negatively affect many different levels of the business experience. Leadership training can have a great, positive impact on businesses to ensure that they stay current and relevant with their leadership style. Productivity is then influenced through the following aspects:

#### **Good employee relationships**

Being a good leader requires emotional intelligence. The more you communicate, listen and try to understand your fellow employees the more likely they are to work harder. Understanding those you are managing allows you to understand the most effective way to convey your vision and how to best work together to reach it. Consolidating this relationship allows you to give your workforce a forum to air their opinion and have their own voices avoiding workers to feel undervalued or under appreciated. These interpersonal relationships can also be important to motivate workers through trust and a sense of purpose and in building an interworking level of respect.

#### **Team empowerment**

The art of being a good leader comes through empowering your employees. This can come in the form of allowing them to communicate their thoughts or even through delegation. Showing that you trust those around you with some of your own workload allows them to feel valued and to gain their own level of importance within the company. It also gives a sense of freedom that can help ideas to generate quicker and to be implemented faster.

Leadership is especially necessary during the more challenging times of the business year, if you share the duties during this time it can create a more stimulating atmosphere for individuals within the company and helps further their personal empowerment.

#### **Optimum performance**

Effective leadership and a valued group of employees can only equate to positive business performance. Taking control of your team, role modelling a positive ideal and setting a clear plan ahead of them, altogether forms an efficient, functioning body of production and good results. Heightened morale and quality leadership will give the best, optimum outcome and allows the perfect atmosphere for innovation and development.

#### **Your own self-development**

Being a successful leader not only has productive and practical outcomes for your employees and business but also for you as an individual. Leaders can never stop learning about those around them and about the fast paced, changing world they live in. Leadership styles often need to adapt and change to the relevant issues of the times which means that your knowledge will have to keep growing,

As a leader you are in control of setting up an environment where your employees can motivate and empower themselves. This has a domino effect in ensuring they stay engaged and, therefore, are consequently productive.

## **Managing Your Team's Performance**

Performance management must be done to assess the success of a business and of its individual employees. High performance teams typically have inspiring leaders who have achieved employee engagement and who have connected with them so everyone is working together to reach a shared goal, but in what ways can a team's performance be managed to reach this status?

### **Objectives**

An organisation should decide what it is they want their team to achieve and in what way they are going to measure it. This can generally mean having a shared understanding of the business' vision, the core values of the company or any other specific criteria those in charge perceive as important. With clear, understood expectations leaders can work with their employees, providing the necessary support and guidance for them to keep on achieving.

### **Training and development conversations**

Building relationships between managers and their workers through a mutual focus on development and growth is key to keeping employees engaged. Ensuring scheduled time is put aside for conversations that contribute to this and to partnering up to collectively recognise an individual's strengths and weaknesses is crucial to managing performance within the workplace. These conversations give employees chance to raise difficulties they are having with their leader or alternatively, give others the opportunity to be further challenged.

Furthermore, managers can set learning goals for their employees as development conversations further allow managers to depict areas that individuals need further training.

### **Communication and Feedback**

Employees appreciate being able to understand how they are doing and to be given evaluative feedback relating to their performance. Many businesses offer this through annual reviews but increasing the frequency of feedback can ensure a tighter relationship and increased improvement in performance in a smaller space of time. Giving feedback following training and development programmes can allow employees to visualise their own personal development and to gain a sense of achievement through improved performance.

Feedback allows you to offer praise, where it is deserved. Recognition within the work place can often work as reward and even instil an element of friendly competition that will also work together to drive performance within your team.

When it comes to setting up a performance management model: the simple the better. Having a clear structure of what is expected from your employees and recognising how you are going to get there together has a great impact on

## **Mental Toughness/Resilience In The Workplace**

The current technological era of business has brought increased prosperity and opportunities for companies. However, it has also brought an array of new challenges that can be faced and the ability to practice resilience has become more necessary than ever.

Resilience can be defined as the ability to absorb the impact of failure or a significant disturbance in one's environment, and to still continue to provide a good level of service. It is the ability to develop responses that can be tapped into when challenges become too much, composure is lost and an individual becomes overwhelmed. As a company's pace of work increases and with the complexities of job roles fluctuating each day, resilience is required for employees to carry on through struggles within their work and in their personal lives and the crucial need for 'bounce-back' ability has increased in relation to business success.

Resilience has become of growing interest to researchers as its effects on physical and mental health, well-being and quality of life has become more and more apparent. Many people believe that emotional awareness and capabilities, such as resilience, can be taught and built within a company and that it is the leader's position to instil this. As leaders within business, emotional intelligence skills are fundamental to managing your team's individual resilience. An atmosphere must be created in which employees can use reserved strength to take potential challenges in their stride and can courageously come back to an issue following failure.

Ways in which leaders can build resilience within their organisations are to firstly, **concentrate on their team**. By getting their own team to decide different ways they could respond to uncertainty and change it helps them to **prepare** for future challenges and to feel empowered. Giving them this responsibility and working together with them allows them to feel valued and to let them see a calm approach to problems.

Once you have spent time discussing this with your team it is best to **clearly establish a criterion** for your team to match up to. Demonstrate to them exactly what success looks like to you. But ensure that you do so in a learning environment where there is a level of **trust** between you and the people working for you. Creating the right space where employees can learn through a **fail-forward** approach to mistakes is crucial; show that you understand failure has to happen for success as long as workers are welcome to persevering once they have failed. This approach takes the negative pressure away from challenging times and instils resilience as a criterion of success by converting stress into an opportunity to learn.

Companies must understand that their workers are on a learning journey and that some may need extra training to build personal coping mechanisms and resilience for problems they face both in their personal and work life.



## **The Leadership Mindset**

The support of a good leader is imperative for business success. Consequently, it means it is important to understand what qualities make an effective leader who can run an efficient and productive system for an organisation to achieve.

Employees need a leader that can provide simple, clear communication; one who can direct their team and precisely convey what they want so that it is understood what they expect. They dedicate time and effort into observing and understanding their people, they value input and attune themselves with others' emotional and physical responses to challenges faced. This is important for a stable, cooperative team that can work efficiently and productively as it allows leaders to be aware of what to expect from each individual in their team and delegate responsibilities accordingly.

A good leader creates a working environment that focuses on motivation rather than fear. They recognise the weak attributes of their team but acknowledge them as an area of development rather than a failure. Development is a key part of business, for all the various layers of authority, and a good leader understands the consistent need for training and learning. This approach to mistakes and weakness encourages their employees, reduces anxiety and raises job confidence. A good leader wants to achieve success within their entire company and aids this in creating a positive atmosphere and also through being a supportive aid to buoy their employees through challenging times.

In the fast paced, corporate world a competent leader is also required to keep on selfdeveloping, as well as expecting their staff to. Their role and the fluctuation of business success constantly tests their resilience and strength and as leaders they are closely observed by their team as the example that others must follow. A good leader must demonstrate to their staff the correct and healthy ways to deal with workplace pressure and exemplify how to professionally develop through doing so. However, it is also important that a good leader can practice modesty and humility and recognise when it is inevitable to admit defeat; they must steer their team through optimism and reassess a situation to reach success.

Leadership is a formal role of authority held by someone who, overall, must concentrate on the best routes for their company to sustain economic growth and prosperity. This includes engaging a team to work hard and productively in order to reach success together. These individuals need to be built up and empowered by a leader, understand that they face challenges as a team and to all be encouraged to work towards the same goal in a coherent way. With good leadership comes organisation success; objectives are achieved and performance is high.