



## EPISODE 219

# How to Use Instagram Stories To Grow Your Email List With Tyler McCall

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**AMY PORTERFIELD:** Well hey there. Welcome back to another episode of The Online Marketing Made Easy Podcast. I'm your host, Amy Porterfield, and I am thrilled that you're here today.

Today's episode is all about Instagram stories and how to use this fast-growing platform to build your email list.

I don't know about you but Instagram is by far my favorite platform, mostly because I love Instagram stories but also because I think the connections on Instagram feel more real than any other social platform.

That is just my opinion but maybe you agree as well. As for Instagram stories, if you are on Instagram you have probably either recorded an Instagram story yourself, viewed one (or several) they are completely addictive, or you've heard someone else talk about Instagram stories and you aren't really sure what the heck they were talking about.

Wherever you fall in this equation there is one thing that is certain. You, as a business owner, can and should be using Instagram and Instagram stories to create more solid, real connections that will go far beyond just chatting on social media if you do it right.

Speaking of doing it right, today my guest is Tyler J. McCall, an Instagram expert that is going to share a step-by-step strategy to grow your email list using Instagram stories.



Let me just tell you this strategy that Tyler's going to share has nothing to do with the swipe up feature on Instagram stories so if you don't have it you're good to go because we're not even going to use it in this strategy.

Tyler's own Instagram stories are a perfect example of how to do it right. He's going to break all of it down for us on today's episode.

Before we get there, since today is all about list building, this episode is sponsored by my free masterclass, The Ultimate List-Building Catch-Up Plan, my proven three-stack system for leveraging the most powerful what's-working-now list-building strategies without the stress, tech confusion, or crazy overwhelm.

Go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/listbuilding> to sign up for the free webinar. If you're struggling to get started with list building or if you just aren't sure where to start or if you've been trying to list build but nothing seems to be working you've got to get on this free masterclass.

Tyler is officially in the house so let's get this mini training started. It is guaranteed to be jam packed with value so let's do this.

**AMY:** Tyler, welcome back to the show. First off, I cannot tell you how many people have told me how helpful your content was around making money through online workshops.

They reference it with me all the time in my Facebook groups. It was Episode #201, [How to Make Money Without Webinars](#). My students love step by step and you did not disappoint.

I'm so happy you're back with us today talking all about your specialty, helping entrepreneurs grow their businesses with Instagram, specifically, how to grow your email list through Instagram stories.

I know you have some really good examples of doing just that but let's not get ahead of ourselves. First, tell my listeners a little bit more about you and your online business.

**TYLER:** Hello, Amy. Thank you for having me on today.

**AMY:** I'm so excited.



**TYLER:** I'm so excited. This is literally a dream come true. I'm so, so excited to be here and so grateful for you. My name's Tyler J. McCall and I help folks use Instagram in a really intentional way to grow their business and grow their list.

I do that through an online community called [The Follower To Fan Society](#). I've been on Instagram for a number of years and I've been teaching folks how to use it for business since 2015.

**AMY:** Tyler, I love what you're doing on Instagram. Give us a little bit of your personal background too because on Instagram we get to see your family. We get to see the fact that you just made a big move. Tell me a little bit about that.

**TYLER:** My partner, Eric, and I moved to Chicago in the fall of 2017 from North Carolina. I was a born and bred North Carolinian. I had never left the state. I had left the state but I had never lived outside of North Carolina until last year.

Before I did this whole social media thing I was in the non-profit world. I did a lot of work around volunteerism, community organizing, and working with non-profit organizations to help communicate their causes online and in person.

I'm really excited because I get to pull all of that work and experience into what I do now with building communities online.

**AMY:** I didn't know that about you but it makes perfect sense. You really are all about serving and supporting so that's just running through your blood in your past life as well.

Now it's all starting to make sense. This is perfect. So let's dive into our topic today, How to Grow Your Email List Through Instagram Stories. Many of my listeners probably use stories to some degree but for those who have never ventured out into Instagram storyland briefly tell us about an Instagram story.

What is it? How do we find them when we're on Instagram? How many people are using stories both personally and for business?

**TYLER:** Instagram stories has been on the scene since August 2016. I'll be honest, Amy, when Instagram stories came out I was so annoyed because I was just starting to figure out SnapChat.

**AMY:** Right? Exactly!



**TYLER:** It was a platform and everyone was on it. I was trying to figure it out. Most of what I was doing was on Instagram but I thought I would give SnapChat a whirl and then Instagram stories completely ripped off SnapChat.

**AMY:** Totally.

**TYLER:** Instagram has owned up to that fact as well, that they ripped them off. If you use SnapChat you will be familiar with Instagram stories. It is content shared in Instagram itself, typically photos and videos. You can also share text space images.

You can create them using Instagram or you can create them externally and upload them to your Instagram account. The key thing here is that the content goes away after 24 hours unless you add it as an Instagram story highlight to your profile, which is literally a whole other thing.

That is a whole episode for Instagram story highlights. It's a whole other world. What you need to know is that you can create this content and it goes away after 24 hours. Your photos or graphics last six seconds and your videos can be up to 15 seconds long.

I love it because it's literally one of the easiest pieces of content to create. Instagram has all of the creation tools built right in. You can create videos, stop motion, you can do photos, you can type on the screen, you can do boomerang, you can do reverse videos, and all of these different cool types of content right on your phone.

You don't need any other software or any other tool. That's one of the reasons I love it so so much.

**AMY:** I do too. I love the fact that it goes away in 24 hours. It just makes it feel a little less permanent. It doesn't have to be perfect. You can play around with things and experiment. If you hate it...I put stuff up that I'm not loving but it goes away in 24 hours so it's okay.

**TYLER:** I think it's a really powerful tool for folks who are still on the fence. I know we've been talking about this for years but they are still on the fence about using video in their business.

I get it. Going live is stressful. Creating video content can be overwhelming. But, an Instagram story literally disappears after 24 hours so it doesn't matter what you do, if



you look goofy, if your hair or makeup isn't done, it's going to disappear anyway so it's a great way to start trying out video in your business.

**AMY:** Exactly. I love it. Tell me about some stats.

**TYLER:** This is the crazy thing about Instagram stories. It has grown dramatically just in the past few months. As of early 2018 Instagram now has more than 800 million users. They are on track to have a billion users within the next few months.

Some of the reasons I love Instagram really come down to the fact that it's such an engaging platform. Of those 800 million people 500 million are on the app every single day. Over half of the Instagram users are daily active users.

But here's the thing with Instagram stories, this is where this all comes into play, over 300 million Instagram users are on Instagram stories every day. Of the people who are on Instagram each and every day who are spending time on the platform over half of them are actually on Instagram stories.

I know we are going to talk about this a little bit later but really what we are seeing on Instagram is that Instagram stories are taking over as the content of choice. Instagram likes this. They like that we are creating stories because that gives them another place to run ads.

Here's the other cool thing. As a business owner and marketer Instagram story ads are a really powerful tool as well. But one of the best parts about Instagram stories from our perspective as marketers and business owners is that people are now spending more time on Instagram because of Instagram stories.

Actually, the latest numbers are showing that Instagram users are adding an additional ten minutes per day of time on the app because of Instagram stories. We are actually seeing more Generation Z folks spend even more time, on average 13-15 minutes longer on Instagram because of Instagram stories.

**AMY:** Oh my gosh, there are so many good numbers here. So 300 million people are using Instagram stories every day. That's impressive. That number is really climbing quickly too, which I love.

I hate to admit that I spend more than ten minutes per day watching other people's stories. I love reality TV. I know you're in the same boat with me with Real Housewives, right? We're on the same page.



**TYLER:** That's right, yes.

**AMY:** We love reality TV and sometimes those InstaStories really feel like it. I feel like some of the best Instagram stories feel like reality TV. They are a little bit hard not to watch when they're that good.

I love that so many people are watching them. You said something about Instagram stories becoming the platform of choice for a lot of people on Instagram. Instagram is definitely liking that, of course.

Here's another thing. I think you do a really good job on Instagram of mixing the personal and business. I feel like I know your partner, Eric. If you ever come to my house I feel like he's going to be my best friend.

That's what's so fun about Instagram. By the way guys, if you're not following Tyler on Instagram he is @tylerjmccall and I'm, of course @amyporfield. We want to hear from you, specifically, we want to hear from you in our DMs but we're going to get to that a little bit later.

Okay, Tyler. What does this huge popularity of Instagram stories mean for businesses and for the Instagram platform as a whole?

**TYLER:** I think the first thing is just that recognition of the fact that Instagram stories have taken over. A majority of the folks on that platform every single day are now showing up on Instagram stories and consuming Instagram stories.

Here's the other thing. I don't have any stats to back this up but I really feel that the more I look at the platform the more I watch how I'm consuming content and how all of my students are consuming content. It's the fact that people are now spending more time watching Instagram stories than they are spending time scrolling through their feed.

I think that is a huge shift on Instagram and it really changes the way that any of us are using Instagram as a platform. If people aren't spending as much time in their feed that means that in-feed engagement is decreasing a bit and we may not have to create as much content or post as often because our content lasts so much longer now.

Instead we can put so much effort and energy into Instagram stories. Amy, I know you said you probably spend more than ten minutes a day on Instagram stories. When



you are on Instagram where are you putting your time? Is it on InstaStories or is it scrolling through your feed?

**AMY:** A million percent on the stories.

**TYLER:** Right? Same thing for me and same for all of my students. They are just so fun and easy to consume. It's such incredible content. That's a really big thing for us to pay attention to as business owners.

As we know, video content is preferred more and more and the reason I love Instagram stories so much is that this means there are now millions of people every single day waiting for the right content to show up for them on Instagram stories.

Instagram stories are really the easiest way for your followers to directly message you and for you to open up a conversation with them. Instagram has actually told us that the stats show that one in five Instagram stories leads to a direct message.

For me as a business owner that's an incredible opportunity to have the change to open up a conversation with my potential student, my potential customer or client, and the fact that people are just consuming these Instagram stories and I have the chance to have that conversation just means it's a no brainer for where I want to spend my time and put some energy into marketing my business.

**AMY:** You are so right. I like how you put it. There are millions of people every single day waiting for the right content to show up for them on Instagram stories. I always tell my students it's so important that you find your avatar's pain point, find a solution to help them, and serve them well.

If you're doing that you're definitely putting the right content in front of them. I like that we're talking about getting them to have a conversation with you, a direct message. That's so important.

I know you're going to take us through a step-by-step actionable process and I want all of my listeners right now to feel free to take notes because we're going to cover a lot of ground really quickly.

Tyler has been so gracious to put a great freebie together that I'll have in my show notes. Or, if you want to just go there directly because you don't want to miss anything you can go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/219download>.



Tyler let's get to it. You're going to teach us how to grow our email list through Instagram stories. So take it away.

**TYLER:** Okay, I'm so excited about this. Before we get all the way to the list-building strategy I want to just take a few seconds to talk about creating really high-quality Instagram stories before we start trying to get people to join our email list they need to actually watch our Instagram stories.

**AMY:** Okay, perfect.

**TYLER:** Let's talk a little bit about how to create that high-quality content. As you are creating Instagram stories I want you to know what you hope to accomplish through your story and what you want your followers to do with your story.

I see a lot of folks creating Instagram stories right now without a purpose or intention. They may just be showing bits and pieces of their day or what they had for dinner or what their kids are doing this weekend, a little bit of their work. They are showing all of these different types of content.

But there is really no purpose or strategy to them. The best Instagram stories are going to be those that are created with that clear purpose in mind. Really, the reason we want to be strategic on our Instagram stories is because we want people to watch them so that we then do have the opportunity to have these conversations.

It doesn't have to be all about your business and what you do. Let's be honest, that can get boring after a while. Instagram stories can be about you, what you enjoy, your personal life.

On my InstaStories I talk about Instagram but Eric and I do mid-day dance breaks on my Instagram stories.

**AMY:** My favorite.

**TYLER:** Thank you. I'll talk about what shows we're watching because we are a reality television show....Let's just say we're fans. We're fans.

**AMY:** I was looking for the word "Junkie" but okay.





**TYLER:** I will do my Target run because I love a good Target run. I'll share all of those things on my Instagram story. But if creating those types of stories there needs to be a purpose behind them.

There needs to be a reason for what you're doing whether it's to connect more with your followers or to allow them to see themselves in you or to create some common ground with them.

Those types of stories are really great for getting your followers closer to you and what you do. There's a method to all of this madness. I'm going to break it down and make it really simple for you.

I call this creating a story arc in your Instagram story. We're going to take it back to grade school. I want us to think about what all good stories have. If you go back to elementary school I'm sure you can envision either something on the blackboard or maybe on an overhead projector of this outline of a good story.

You're going to see that your teacher has created an outline and they are going to tell you that all good stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The exact same thing is true with Instagram stories.

As you are creating Instagram stories I want you to use the beginning of your story to set the tone for your followers. You should really let them know at the very beginning in your first video, or the first thing you are going to show on your screen, what the story is about and what they can expect.

The reason we do this is that we want to give them an out from the very beginning. We don't want people to watch halfway through your story and then get annoyed that they've wasted their time because then they won't watch your stories in the future.

We want to make sure we're setting the tone at the very beginning making it really clear what the story is about. We do this because it is very annoying for our followers to come into a story halfway through an experience. They can't figure it out. I know it annoys me.

Amy I have a question for you.

**AMY:** Okay.



**TYLER:** I don't mean to put Hobie on the spot. I know we are all fans of Hobie. We're waiting for Hobie's podcast to come out.

**AMY:** Oh god no!

**TYLER:** But I want to hear from you if you've ever been watching a movie or show, maybe an episode of Real Housewives, and Hobie...

**AMY:** He won't. We will not watch that. Well, I am, okay, yes. If I'm watching it and Hobie walks in, okay, got it.

**TYLER:** He comes in halfway through and he starts asking you questions like who's Sheree or "What is Dorothea doing?" Or "Why does she have a British accent if she's from Connecticut?"

How annoying is that? You have to pause the show.

**AMY:** It's so annoying. I hate it. I hate when I have to pause the show, explain everything to him, and then he doesn't even care but why is he asking? Then it's even more annoying. So yes, I'm with you there.

**TYLER:** That is the exact same thing you're doing to your followers when they're coming into your Instagram story and you've just decided to start the story in the middle of an experience or activity or lesson.

It's so frustrating. So what they are going to do is learn and come to expect the fact that they are always going to be lost when they tune in to your Instagram stories so they are just not going to do it.

**AMY:** I never even thought of it like that, Tyler. Okay, this is good. Keep going, this is good.

**TYLER:** Once you've set the tone in the beginning and started out building your Instagram story art, once you get to the middle this is where you need to take your followers through some experience. Take them on a journey. Show them something fun or meaningful or educational that they can use.

This is where you can answer their questions. You can even highlight your products or services here and talk about what you do.



What I really want you to focus on here is kind of what we all talk about when we're creating content for our communities. That content needs to be engaging and actionable and valuable for the folks who have decided to follow us online.

You can really use this space as a way to move your followers closer to you as you're creating this content. But here's a hot tip for you as you're creating Instagram story content.

I want you to make sure you're diversifying your content. Maybe mix in a photo with a few videos and maybe a boomerang, these different features Instagram has built in for you. That just keeps your audience engaged with the different types of content instead of just doing the same graphic or same video or same talking head video over and over and over again.

That's what you're going to do in the middle of the story. That's really where the content is going to come. But then the end of the story is so, so important. This is where we need to wrap it all up really nicely and put a bow on it.

You need your Instagram story to have some kind of conclusion. Our brains literally cannot handle a cliffhanger. We need something at the end. We need a resolution at the end of our Instagram stories.

As you're creating your Instagram stories you really want to finish it off because your followers, if they are learning that you're starting your Instagram stories with no context, they can also learn that you never actually finish your story so why would they watch it?

Why would they watch it when there is never any conclusion for them? I want you to get used to always wrapping your Instagram story up with some kind of conclusion.

There are a few ways you can do this. You can build anticipation for what's next. Maybe you are doing a series of Instagram stories or maybe you're getting ready to go on a trip or you're getting ready to release a new product or service.

Build some anticipation for the next day's Instagram story or the next day's content that's going to point to that. You can also use this at the end as a way to infuse that call to action into what you're doing.

Point your followers to your feed. I love this strategy of starting a conversation in an Instagram story and finish the conversation in the posts on your feed. You're going to



ask your followers to go to the post on your feed to either see the finished product or contribute an idea or answer a question for you.

Tell folks in the post on your feed to go to your Instagram story to learn more about this idea or to see behind the scenes. You create a really great kind of system of people consuming all of your content.

This also tells Instagram's algorithm this person is really interested in what that person is doing so let's show them some more of their content in their feed as well. Or you can send them to a direct message and we're going to talk about that next.

The direct message is such a vital part of what you're doing on Instagram in particular. InstaStories allow you to open up that opportunity to have a conversation.

An example of what happens when there's no conclusion...I actually have a student I was working with on Instagram stories. She was committed to doing them really well and she started an Instagram story.

She was going on a trip for her business and she did on the plane, getting to the city, checking in to her hotel. She said she was going to have a nice night in before her meetings the next day. She was going to order room service, "which I love because it's one of the most fabulous things you can do for yourself."

Then her Instagram story ended. I was so annoyed. I texted her and demanded to know what she ordered for dinner. Why would you start an Instagram story and take me on an experience and not let me finish being a part of the experience with you?

**AMY:** I love it. That's a great example. We just get invested in these stories and we do want to know how it ends. This is good. I never thought of it this way.

**TYLER:** I was so bothered. I was so annoyed with her. That's how your followers are whenever you don't finish an Instagram story. It's annoying for them.

Listen, I get it. Life gets in the way. You're running businesses. You're raising tiny humans. You have Real Housewives to watch. You have a lot going on. But at the same time if you're going to start the story you need to have some kind of conclusion for your followers.



Social media is all about building these expectations and habits with our communities. Whenever we do something like that we're telling them we're not committed to your experience with this content.

Whenever we're creating our stories with beginnings, a middle, and an end it really allows your followers to have this whole experience. They are more likely to watch the whole story and are also more likely to watch your content again and again and again.

What you're going to see is you are going to lose return viewers if you're always starting a story without any context or if you're always ending it without any conclusion. You're not going to be able to retain your viewers if there's no strong content in the middle.

You're going to see your numbers drastically decrease. Maybe you have 100 people that watch the first part of your story but if you're not committed to your content by the third or fourth part of your story it's down to 10 or 20 people and that's not good.

You want them to be retained throughout the whole experience. You want them to come back again and again and again. That's why that conclusion is so important.

**AMY:** I have some nuts and bolts questions for you about what you just went over. The first question is: A story could be three 15-second videos of a talking head or some talking head and some images or whatever.

When you talk about beginning, middle, and end I'm getting nervous that it's a 15-minute story with a bunch of clips. How long is too long and what does this look like?

**TYLER:** That is such a good question. Instagram stories do get painfully long sometimes. My rule of thumb and what I share with my students is that you should never let the dashes turn into dots. If you've ever created or consumed an Instagram story you know what I'm talking about.

Across the top of the screen where someone's creating an Instagram story there are dashes that symbolize how many pieces of content are in that story. If your dashes have turned into dots because you have so many crammed in there it is way too much content.

I have kind of found that the magic number, for at least my community, is 10-12 pieces of content in a 24-hour period.



**AMY:** Okay.

**TYLER:** It's definitely something to test out with your community. Some folks may be really committed to what you're doing. I know one influencer online shares really long Instagram stories. She even pokes fun at herself and calls her Instagram story viewers "The Long Haulers" who make it all the way to the end, which I love.

She will notice when it starts to get too long and she's like, "Okay sorry, this is going to get really long," so she warns people.

But, for my folks, it's about 10-12 pieces in a 24-hour period. It can definitely be too long but if you're going to keep it shorter it still needs to be really focused. You need to have a clear introduction, a clear piece of content with something actionable or education or valuable for folks, and then you need to wrap it up at the end.

Even if you're just going to do two or three or four videos you can still follow the same process.

**AMY:** I love dashes turning to dots. That is so good. I can totally see it so next time I'm going to pay attention to mine just to make sure they don't get a little too long.

Most of my listeners are going to make them too short because they're not used to doing these. This beginning, middle, and end will actually extend the life of their story a little bit and that's a good thing.

I'm not too worried about most of my listeners because they're just getting started with this.

My other nuts and bolts question...I feel like your lighting is really good when I watch your stories. Most of the time you've got pretty amazing lighting. What are you doing? My listeners always want to know about the technology side of it. Is there a light that you are standing in front of?

**TYLER:** I'm standing in front of an incredible light that you can't buy because it's around us all the time. It's the sun.

**AMY:** Like, don't you tease us with something that's not out anymore.



**TYLER:** I know, right? Here's the thing. All of Instagram, the whole world of Instagram, some of the best type of content you're ever going to be able to create in your feed, on your story, or anything, sunlight/natural lighting is your best friend as you're creating that content.

I'm just really intentional as I'm creating my Instagram stories. I'm always getting in front of a window as I'm creating that content.

The other thing is if I'm going to create content when the lighting isn't ideal I'll typically put a filter over it.

**AMY:** Oh, good idea.

**TYLER:** In my community I talk with my students and one of our fun little hacks with Instagram stories is if you want to do an Instagram story (I kind of force them to do Instagram stories) but you're not feeling up to it today because the hair and makeup isn't where you want it to be (that's a very common excuse for my students) our rule of thumb is to put a filter on it.

A black and white filter will make you look incredible in ways you never dreamt possible.

**AMY:** So true. You are so right. I love this. Stand in front of a window if you can with natural lighting in any way. And, if not, we're using a filter.

One more question, something you do really well, Tyler, that I'm loving. Words on the screen. Talk to me about that.

**TYLER:** There are a few things we need to know. The first thing is it's actually a Facebook stat that 80% of folks on Facebook are watching video with no sound. That's huge so on Facebook it's become common place that we see captions or some kind of text on the screen with video.

With Instagram stories we're not seeing it as much. Instagram hasn't given us any hard and fast stats yet about whether or not people are watching with audio on or off.

About a month ago I started doing captions on all of my videos on Instagram stories. It started out as an accessibility thing. In our community we have members of our community who are deaf or hard of hearing or may have some issues consuming content that they are hearing.



I am really conscious as I'm creating content for my students. We are giving them different ways at which they can learn and consume content. That bled over into what I am doing on Instagram stories.

Heck, there are probably people watching right now who can't hear and they would love a caption and they are going to stick around. Now it's become something that my followers love because, first of all they may be watching with the sound off, secondly, you can sometimes read the synopsis of the caption more quickly than listening to what someone's saying.

It really helps keeps retention high and that retention of your viewer from the first story until the very end of your story in that 24-hour period is one of those key metrics to measure to make sure what you're doing is actually working and that it's effective.

I also believe that retention is kind of what informs the algorithm for how people are seeing the rest of your content in Instagram. Captioning what you're doing, even writing a synopsis of what you're saying, or at the very least just putting a few words on the screen that kind of summarize the conversation so you are letting people know they are interested in this or they want to swipe away from what is being said.

That's why I really love putting words on the screen. It's made a huge difference for my community and I know a lot of my students are doing that now as well.

**AMY:** I absolutely love it. I have a confession in that sometimes Hobie likes to watch some our favorite shows at night time. Billions is one. Are you watching that yet, Tyler?

**TYLER:** I'm not.

**AMY:** Oh my gosh! It's so good. We watch Billions together and I love watching TV with Hobie at night but it doesn't always keep my attention and I'd quite honestly rather be on Instagram sometimes. So I sneak it and I watch Instagram stories when we're watching Billions.

But I can't put the volume on because I don't want Hobie to know I'm not totally into it. When Tyler's stories come on I know exactly what he's talking about and I can't hear a thing he's saying but I feel more connected to him because I can see him.

I've started to do this a little bit more too. I am following suit in terms of adding the words. I watch InstaStories a lot without the sound on because I'm a big Instagram story sneaker and I need those words.





I feel like you've transformed it so it's perfect. Thank you for that.

**TYLER:** Of course. Hopefully this will spread and everyone will do it and we can all sneakily watch each other's Instagram stories.

**AMY:** Right? It's so perfect. I love it. Once our listeners begin to create stories with a strategy, which doesn't mean no fun, it just means we want to be more deliberate and we want some kind of transformation. We want to make an impact on our viewers. We want to have an experience.

We also want to make sure we keep the end in mind. We've got the beginning, the middle, and the end.

Now that we've done that, what's next? How do we take it to the next level and actually grow our email list through Instagram stories?

**TYLER:** The first thing with that strategy in place I want you to get used to posting more consistently and more regularly. Also, start using features with Instagram stories like polls that allow you to drive interaction.

The polling feature is a really fun and great way to get people tapping on your Instagram story and engaging with what you're sharing and also having conversations via direct messages.

You need to do those strategies first because that is really what's going to teach your followers that you are actually engaging with them, that when you say something and they say something back that you are going to respond. They can grow to expect that response and engagement from you.

I want to walk you through a few strategies that are going to help you keep the experience for your followers really native and as easy as possible for them. That is a really key thing to focus on here.

This does mean it will require a little bit more work from you when having a conversation with someone but it is so worth it in the end because it just makes this fact of growing a list or even getting people into a webinar or getting them to a product or service so much more effective.

Here's the thing. We all know that driving traffic off of the social media platform can be difficult as it is. Instagram actually makes it a little bit tougher because we can't



put clickable links in our posts. We can't put links in our Instagram stories unless you are verified or you have a business profile and at least 10,000 followers.

Really, the only link you have left is the link to your Instagram bio. I actually get around this. I have swipe up but I don't use it regularly because the honest thing is it's not as magical as people think it is.

I know that may be controversial for some folks.

**AMY:** Yeah, talk to me about that. What are you talking about?

**TYLER:** The problem with the swipe up feature is that it's lazy. It's lazy. It's too passive for your followers. Instead of relying on the swipe up, or a lot of my students will just make the excuse that they don't have 10,000 followers and don't know if they will ever have 10,000 followers. They will never get to swipe up so why would they even try it?

Instead of relying on that as an excuse why don't we figure out a way to work around that by having conversations through direct messages? You can send a link via a direct message and it is clickable for people who receive that message from you.

Even though I have swipe up I don't use it as much because I find it to be pretty passive for my audience. I want to engage with them and I want to make it a no brainer for them to either join my list or download my freebie or sign up for my webinar by having a conversation with them.

Direct messages are where I talk to most of my potential students. It's where I answer questions. It's also really powerful as you're launching a product or talking about a service.

It is where you are able to kind of squash those objections for folks through direct messages and even give them more value on top of what you're doing in stories. Here are some other cool things. I love using direct messages because I can hear my students' stories.

I can learn more about their pain points and I can rip off their copy. People are sending me the issues they are having with Instagram and I can literally copy and paste those words...I'm much like you. I keep this document of pain points and ideas and copy that we can pull from.



All of those conversations go into that so as I'm creating copy to promote my offerings I can pull from that right there all through conversations I'm having in a direct message.

**AMY:** This is so good. Really guys, this is the reason I wanted Tyler to come on the show and talk to us. There is so much power in the DMs and I don't think we're taking advantage of this.

A few months back I wasn't taking advantage of the DMs as much either. I had heard Tyler talk about it so it was in my head. Then I went to my mastermind and Lewis Howes happened to be one of the guest speakers.

He was talking about how much business he does in the DMs. I was like, "What?" At the time Jasmine Star was sitting at my table at this mastermind and she shook her head, "Amy, seriously. It's in the DMs."

Then I talked to Tyler again and he is saying it's in the DMs. I'm totally sold on this. So for the last few months all I've really paid attention to more than anything on Instagram, beyond creating my stories, is getting in those DMs.

It is powerful. I said, "Tyler, you've got to come on the show and talk about this because I really do think more people need to take advantage of it."

First of all, tell me this, because one of the things that comes up with my listeners is, "Who's got time for that?" I'm trying to do a million different things. Who has time to spend in their DMs?

First of all I want to know how much time you spend but I also already know that it's time well spent so that's a given. But how much time do you spend? How do you manage that?

**TYLER:** On an average day I'll get about 50 to 100 DMs.

**AMY:** That's a lot.

**TYLER:** It's a lot and typically those are responses to my Instagram stories or people DMing me a specific question or maybe a new follower. There is some spam thrown in there as well.



I am approaching it in a couple of ways. First of all, any time I get on Instagram I'm working as quickly as possible to clean out my direct messages and respond to comments.

I get it. This takes time but for me Instagram is really one of the few places I am constantly marketing my business. I don't have a YouTube channel. I don't blog. I don't even have a website. I have a landing page, Instagram, and my email list. That's it for me and my business.

It's where I have so many of these conversations. On an average day I would say I spend around an hour kind of spread out throughout the day. I try to be real intentional about spending some focused time on Instagram in the morning, around lunch time, and again in the evening.

I'm really conscious about responding to DMs as quickly as possible because I find that once you get that backlog of 10, or 20, or 100 DMs it seems impossible to respond to them.

**AMY:** I've so been there. It's so true.

**TYLER:** So responding as quickly as possible. The other thing is just knowing that not every DM requires you to write a long heartfelt response. If someone is responding to a funny Instagram story you did with some laughing emojis then send some emojis back or just drop them a little heart emoji through Instagram itself.

It doesn't always have to be some story or conversation. Just make sure you are always responding because, again, we are building habits in our audience and teaching them that if they DM you, you are going to respond back to them.

That makes their relationship that much more valuable. That's the thing, if you're going to do it commit to doing it. Block out some time throughout the day where you are going to be on Instagram anyway and respond to those DMs as quickly as possible.

One cool thing to note is that Instagram has just rolled out some brand new features for the inbox on Instagram. If folks are listening and they don't have this yet just be patient.



As with all Instagram features they take a long time to get to most people but these new features allow you to do filtering in your inbox and it's so, so helpful. You can filter your messages by read and unread.

They also have a new star feature where you can highlight certain messages you want to keep up with or find later on. Before this it was literally a black hole on Instagram in the DMs.

**AMY:** For sure.

**TYLER:** Now those new tools for sorting and filtering your messages make it a lot easier to keep up with your DMs.

**AMY:** I'm excited about that. I don't have those features yet but maybe if I update my app. I'm going to look for that because I agree, it does feel like a black hole sometimes.

One other thing I want to mention is once I started hearing Tyler talk about these DMs and my other friends that I mentioned, I became more intentional about it. If I don't have it scheduled I'm the type of personality that I just won't do it.

I actually get into Asana. Every day I have all of my tasks in my project management tool, Asana, and one of them is daily Monday through Friday. It says, "Check DMs". I am in my DMs every single morning.

If you want to chat with me send me a DM on Instagram because it is me and I'm in there. I'm deliberate about it so it's going to happen. If you need that extra help as well, I schedule it as though it is a task of the day.

I think it's more natural to Tyler because he teaches Instagram and he's in it all the time. But for those of us who aren't we might need to put it as an action item every single day in your planner. That's just one thing to think about.

We grow our email list through Instagram stories through the DM. I want you to tell me exactly how to do that. I'm not getting 100 DMs a day. What are you doing to get people to actually engage with you that way and then how are you turning that into growing your email list?



**TYLER:** Like I said before, establishing those really consistent posting habits for you and your business is the first step. You have to make sure you are showing up on Instagram stories regularly.

I encourage my students to try to do Instagram stories at least five days a week whenever they are on Instagram. I'm also a big fan of actually posting in the feed a lot less often than you think you may need to.

That allows you to spend more time on Instagram stories. Showing up on Instagram stories really, really consistently and making sure the content is great, valuable content is important.

It doesn't always have to be educational. You don't always have to teach something or share something or show your process. It can be fun. It can be you. It can be personality. But it still needs to be valuable and really high quality content.

The next step is to get in the habit of using calls to action throughout your Instagram story, especially at the end of your Instagram story because we need your followers to get in the habit of engaging with you.

We need them to get into the habit of answering your polls and selecting an answer whenever you post a poll. We need to get them into the habit of sending you direct messages.

I call these strategies habit-building strategies because we want to start really small with something as simple as a like on an Instagram post or engaging with a poll and grow to something large like a direct message where you can actually pitch to your potential customer or client.

Building those habits just takes time and I know that's something that a lot of times I hear from folks that they start posting on Instagram stories every day for a week and they want to know why they aren't selling more.

This takes time. You have to post consistently. You have to show up consistently. You have to create the content that has those calls to action starting with really simple, easy questions like, "What are you doing today" or "What's your favorite flavor of ice cream" or "Do you love Target as much as I do?"

Then have a conversation via direct message and you can start asking those harder questions and start learning more about your audience. Then really getting to a place



where you are using your Instagram stories as a place to invite your followers to participate in what you're doing or invite them to learn more about your product or service or a freebie you have.

It's really about this idea of creating an invitation for people. I've created a little system I use myself. I call it an Instagram story opt-in sandwich, because who doesn't love sandwiches?

As you are using Instagram stories to grow your list this is what I want you to do. This is the process. The first thing is to start your Instagram story by actually introducing the opt in. That is the introduction to what you're doing.

This could be a lead magnet, a content upgrade, any kind of free resource. It can even be a webinar if you wanted it to be. I want you to talk about what this thing includes and why it is valuable.

After you've done that I want you to share a testimonial or a review. This is really important here. We want to share something that really shows them "this" is really interesting and really valuable. It is something I am going to find use in.

This can be a screen shot from someone. It can be a quote from someone. It is something that really proves that what you're sharing is valuable for them. Then I want you to invite your followers to send you a direct message to learn more about getting their own copy.

This is where we are going to depart a little bit from what you would typically do. A lot of folks, with the swipe up, would say, "I have a new freebie. This is what it is. Swipe up to get it." That's all they would do.

Without the swipe up they may say, "I have a new freebie. This is what it is. Go to the link in my bio to get this thing," and that's all they would do.

Instead of being that passive with what we're doing I want you to take ownership and be really active in how you are getting people to those free resources that you've created.

Once you've shared what the freebie or resource is share a testimonial or review. That's when the invitation comes into play. You are going to invite them to send you a direct message to learn more and get their hands on a copy.



Then you will have a conversation with them. This is really where your personality and brand voice comes into play. For me, when I do this one, I say, “I have a new resource that I created, this is what it is, this is why it’s valuable. Shoot me a DM. I’d love to share it with you.”

Once people get to my inbox then I have a conversation telling them thanks so much for sending me a DM, “I’d love to share this with you. Here’s the link to access it.”

Or I ask what specific issue they are having when it comes to the topic that this thing addresses and then I will say, “Hey, I think this will be a great resource for you. Here’s how you can get your hands on it,” and send them a link to the landing page directly.

It’s really about having this conversation and not being super passive and, honestly Amy, people just get kind of lazy in what they are doing and they just kind of put it out there and we wonder why people aren’t downloading our freebie or getting to our webinar and getting into our funnel.

Instead, I want you to take ownership of this whole process and share the content. Talk about why they need it and then have the conversation through a direct message to get someone over to that thing.

Of course, always make sure to thank them for their time and even check back with them about whether or not they downloaded it a day later if you wanted to do something like that.

It’s really about having this conversation with folks. It’s what’s all the difference.

**AMY:** It is. It’s so good. It feels very grass roots to me and in a really noisy social media world this is how you get personal. I want to tell a quick story.

When I was doing the B-School promotion I had a quiz created, How to Know if You are Ready For B-School. We had the quiz and I had emailed it to my list and used it in different ways.

I saw it show up to be really powerful when I started to pay attention around the time I started to pay more attention to my DMs. Every time I got a message in my DM about B-School, “I’m not sure if it’s right for me because of” this or that or here’s why “I’m hesitating,” because I did what Tyler says and asked questions.





I said, “If you’re still on the fence, let me know why on a DM.” People would let me know why and when it was appropriate I could say, “I’ve got a quiz. I want you to take this quiz.”

I didn’t stop there. I gave them the link to the quiz. When somebody gives you a link through a DM you’re more likely to pay attention than if it is a swipe up. I do totally agree with Tyler on that one. I never thought of it that way but it makes perfect sense.

When you want a connection with me and I say I have something special “just for you” and ask them to “click here” you will click it. But then I said, “I want you to take the quiz and come back to this DM and tell me what your results were.”

The results could be four different results so they would take the quiz, come back and share with me, and then I would say, “Do these results ring true to you? Do you really agree with them?”

If they say “yes” then they are ready to join B-School. If they say “no” we talk about it. It was the coolest exchange that I got to do a lot of the time. Some of you listening probably had this exchange with me.

I didn’t just say to click the link and “I’ll see you later.” I had them come back and give me some details about that. That was really powerful.

**TYLER:** I love having these conversations with people. First of all, it allows you to qualify your leads so much more effectively. You can literally say to someone, “Hey, this is not a great fit for you.”

You can help save people time and energy in what they are doing in their business. It’s also a great way, Amy, just that effort when people are signing up through something like that.

You have told them, “Yes, this is a great fit for you,” think about how much in the long run you are cutting down on refunds, you’re making their experience so much more meaningful and so much more valuable, and you are just taking that affinity in that relationship they have with you through the roof.

They are like, “Oh my goodness, she took time to have a conversation with me about whether or not this is right. I can trust her even more knowing she has my best interests in mind and the next time I have a question or she has something that she



wants to offer me then I know she's going to be there and she's going to help answer if this is the right fit. She's making sure I have the resources I need to be successful."

It is so, so powerful.

**AMY:** It really is. I want to push this a little further. I want you to give your example of using a poll around webinars.

**TYLER:** Yes, I love this.

**AMY:** Me too.

**TYLER:** You and I first kind of started chatting through direct messages on Instagram. I was doing a webinar and I used a poll to say, "Hey, I'm hosting a free webinar around this topic. Are you interested in that," or does that sound like something you want to learn about? Yes or no?

For everyone who answered "yes" they got a direct message from me. They got a direct message saying, "Hey, I'm so glad you're interested in this webinar. Do you have any questions about this topic? Or, "What's the biggest issue you're having with this topic I'm going to teach about?" Or, "Here's the link to sign up."

Actually Amy, I think I sent you a DM, "Hey I know you said you're interested, I'm just going to send you the link."

**AMY:** Yes, I love it.

**TYLER:** I found that to be a really effective way. Again, you're not being passive. You're not relying on a swipe up or a link in a bio to get people to something. You're making it really engaging and personable for them.

You are also letting people self-qualify whether or not they think you're talking about is the right fit for them. It helps you not just keep talking about the same thing over and over and over again so you can have these really meaningful, pointed conversations.

**AMY:** But you also did something really cool where you asked people if they have signed up for your webinar yet. This is a little bit down the campaign. If they said "no" you would DM them saying, "I've noticed you haven't signed up yet. Here's the link."



**TYLER:** Oh yes. Totally! I do that! That lets me get in the DMs too and say, “Hey, why haven’t you signed up?” Or, “Is this not the right fit for you?” Or, “Is this not the right time?” Or, “Do you want to learn about something else?”

There are unlimited opportunities here by just taking ownership and having those conversations with people. It has made all of the difference for my business by having these strategies in place.

It makes everything so much more personable and so much more engaging. It’s changed everything for me in how I do business.

**AMY:** I totally agree. Me too. I’m so glad I started to use the DMs. I want to get some metrics from you. Give us an example of a recent Instagram story promotion where you put all of this in place and grew your list.

I want some specifics like the names you collected, how many names, how many conversions came from this effort? Do you have anything like that?

**TYLER:** Of course I do. I did my homework, Amy Porterfield.

**AMY:** I love it.

**TYLER:** I’m going to do better. I actually have three examples of some ways I’ve done this recently. The first way is that I am planning a live event later this year. I was trying to figure out how I could promote this and not really burn out my list or make it something that’s going to be too overwhelming for people.

It was a simple hopping on my Instagram stories saying telling them this thing is happening, this is when it’s happening, this is what it’s about, “If you want to learn more shoot me a DM.” We added 89 people to the wait list in 24 hours doing that. That was really exciting.

The last time I did a live launch of my program the week after the doors closed we did a week of content around talking about success stories, sharing testimonials from our new students, and then a really simple call to action, “If you want to know when this opens up next time shoot me a DM, I’d love to add you to our wait list.” We added 238 people to our wait list in one week, which was really exciting.



This is the one that blew my mind. That is the fact that at the beginning of April of this year I ran a one-day sale on my membership community for my birthday. I only promoted it on Instagram stories.

We did \$2,400 in 12 hours, which is really exciting.

**AMY:** Stop it! That is fantastic.

**TYLER:** Then those people converted into our monthly membership and of those folks that have converted we have added about \$5,000 a month in monthly recurring revenue through direct messages on Instagram.

Are you kidding me? That just blows my mind. I love it.

**AMY:** That is life changing. \$5,000 a month. Did I hear you right?

**TYLER:** That's right.

**AMY:** \$5,000 a month. You were able to generate that through DMs. \$5,000 a month is life changing to most people so that is huge Tyler.

**TYLER:** It is and it's all just having those conversations with people and letting people know this thing is going on, "I'd love to share more with you about it. Let me talk you through it. Let me answer your questions. Let me let you know if it's not the right fit for you."

It is such a great way to have those conversations and have that connection. I'm a big proponent of this. You really don't want to just send people to the link in your bio because they won't go there. It's too much work.

You don't want to use the swipe up feature all the time because it gets old and it's really passive. You don't want to just send a link in a DM because you can't insure that people are always going to do that. You need to have a conversation around it.

You also don't want to be really overly salesy or promotional when you're doing this either. I want you to always think about this as an invitation for your followers to connect with you and learn more about you and to solve a problem for them. That's what these DMs allow you to do.



**AMY:** That's so good. I love it. I am so glad you shared some of those specifics. I had no idea you had that much great success. I knew you were doing good but that makes me extra excited.

This is a perfect way to close out this episode. Tyler, I cannot thank you enough for providing step by step. That's what I love to do on these episodes. You gave us a roadmap on Instagram stories and I know these strategies are going to make a huge impact for those that are listening.

Remember, you can get the freebie that Tyler created for us at <http://www.amyporterfield.com/219download> so that you can have all of the notes that he went over and really make them actionable for yourself as well.

Before we go, Tyler, please tell my listeners how they can best get in touch with you. I kind of think I know the answer.

**TYLER:** You may be surprised to hear the best place you can find me is on Instagram [@tylerjmccall](https://www.instagram.com/tylerjmccall). I'd love to connect with you there. We have content going up pretty much on a daily basis. I'd love to chat with you in the DMs and you can also check out [TylerJMcCall.com](http://TylerJMcCall.com) to learn more about Instagram and what we do.

**AMY:** Awesome. Thank you so very much, Tyler, for being on the show. I know my listeners are going to go check you out if they haven't done so already. I cannot wait to dive into those DMs as well. Thank you so very much.

**TYLER:** Of course, thanks for having me, Amy.

**AMY:** Take care. So there you have it. I hope you loved this interview with Tyler as much as I have. He is so much fun to talk to and he has so many smart strategies that are doable. You know I love a step-by-step doable action plan.

Speaking of an action plan, don't forget to get the freebie for today's episode at <http://www.amyporterfield.com/219>. It will take you to the show notes with all the details about today's episode and you will also see a big box where you can click a link and download the freebie from today's episode.

I can't wait to see you again next week, same place, same time. Make it a great week until we meet again. Take care!