



Q+A with Stephanie Redcross, Founder of Vegan Mainstream

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WHO AND WHAT IS “VEGAN MAINSTREAM”?

Vegan Mainstream provides marketing solutions to vegan and vegetarian businesses, as well as to those interested in incorporating more mindful practices and products into their brand. Our strategic marketing plans and services are not only fueled by our extensive experience, knowledge and expertise, but also by our passion to see conscious brands thrive. We believe in and support the veg movement and know that your consumers will appreciate that your mindfulness extends even to how you market your business.

At Vegan Mainstream, we believe a key way to push mindful living forward is through fanning the flame of likeminded brands. We are working hard to build a solid infrastructure of successful businesses and brands to ensure that an ethical lifestyle is accessible to everyone, everywhere. Imagine ethical retail stores, restaurants, clothing options and educational materials in every mall or community – every step in making this a reality is a step that accelerates the veg movement.

Thus our mantra Vegan Mainstream.

I started Vegan Mainstream in 2009 because I was passionate about veganism and wanted to help vegan and vegetarian businesses launch and thrive. I have over a decade of experience in marketing – from small businesses to a Fortune 500 company – and really wanted to marry my passion for marketing with my passion for the vegan cause. Thus, Vegan Mainstream was born. One of the things I enjoy most is really interacting with young companies and entrepreneurs who have great ideas and big hearts and who want to carve out a space in the business world. I have really made it a priority to step away from the computer, to leave the office, and to really see what it is like for vegan and vegetarian businesses today. I have found that one of the most valuable things I can offer to these businesses and entrepreneurs is a network of likeminded individuals and services to draw upon.

The reason I decided to call this company “Vegan Mainstream” is because my overarching goal is to help push the vegan movement forward into the mainstream by nurturing and helping mindful businesses and individuals succeed. I also hope to encourage all businesses to consider both the marketing viability and ethical importance of shifting to veg-friendly products and services.

With over 7 members of the core team and 10 writers, Vegan Mainstream itself has grown significantly since its inception and I couldn't be happier about that. We offer our clients one-on-one consultations, email marketing, website redesign, postcard design and press releases, to name a few services. Clients so far include authors, bloggers, a natural skin care company, a vegan bakery, vegan forums and vegan online stores.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT WHERE YOU GET YOUR CLIENT LEADS?

S: Most of our client leads come from Twitter and Facebook. People like what we are doing and refer us to the stores they visit – as a result we get proposal requests each week that are not related to direct advertising. In addition, our sales manager connects with businesses we view as potential partners.

WHAT ARE YOUR LONG-TERM GOALS FOR THE COMPANY? DO YOU PLAN TO EXPAND YOUR CLIENT BASE?

S: Our long-term goal is to make veganism accessible to everyone by building awareness of, and an audience for, the businesses in the veg community. Thus, we promote products and services that align with the veg movement in its many diverse forms and thus make it mainstream. We believe in the vegan movement and want to do what we can to move the cause and its supporters forward.

We would love to work with larger corporations, however, our main focus at this time is helping small- to medium-sized vegan businesses who are on the ground floor. I have a passion for helping shepherd and implement innovation that has positive effects on the world. We also intend to work with international clients as we continue to grow.

IS VEGANISM AND/OR VEGETARIANISM ALREADY A MAINSTREAM ISSUE? IF NOT, WHEN WILL IT BE?

In a sense, the mindfulness of the veg movement aligns with the mindfulness of the green movement, which has gained significant prominence since the 1970s. In that way, part of the veg movement is already mainstream. Additionally, as health and budget concerns take center stage, the benefits of a plants-based diet are part of the national discussion. In other words, the veg lifestyle is of mainstream importance at this very moment in time and support for the veg movement will only continue to grow. This is an exciting and challenging time for all of us and I look forward to doing my part to egg the veg cause forward.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS YOU THINK BUSINESSES HAVE WHEN THEY HEAR THE WORDS VEGAN AND VEGETARIAN? HOW DO YOU PLAN TO CHANGE THOSE MISCONCEPTIONS?

S: I think one concerning stereotype is that all vegans are hippie activists. While many vegans do have an activist component to their lives, they also exist in all walks of life. There are vegan lawyers, vegan bus drivers, vegan students, vegan doctors, vegan CEOs, and so on. To change this misconception, we need to conduct interviews on, and profile, these diverse individuals so that people and businesses realize that everyday people are vegan--they need shampoo, comfortable shoes and stylish clothing just like everyone else.

Such a campaign could eliminate stereotypes, show businesses that the veg community is a viable market and that we exist everywhere. We want to encourage every business to have vegan options. We as vegans must support and educate these businesses so that they understand the importance of shifting to products that help our community and the planet.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT VEGETARIAN/VEGAN/HOLISTIC COMPANIES WORK WITH VM, AS OPPOSED TO OTHER MARKETING FIRMS OUT THERE?

S: # 1: We are a part of the veg community, we know the community and we are passionate about the community. This passion translates into marketing success for our clients because we believe that when you love what you do and believe in what you do, it shows. We love what we do! Also, because we love and know the veg community, we have access to its best resources and its movers and shakers, and we can streamline our campaigns and strategies to target the right audience in the right way.

#2: Team expertise – we pull in experience from all relevant industries and hire people not only for their marketing and writing talents, but also for their roots in the vegan and vegetarian community. This way everyone is connected to the vision.

#3: Our approach to marketing – all of the products and services we provide to our clients are tested first on our own platforms (from websites to Twitter accounts to email accounts). We develop holistic solutions that include marketing and reporting. We believe the best marketing approach is a tested one. In addition, we don't believe in only luck; instead, we developed a calculated marketing plan to achieve multiple avenues to success.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR PROUDEST MOMENTS AND CLIENT SUCCESS STORIES?

S: I am proud that since its inception Vegan Mainstream has built a strong and talented staff of marketers and writers from the veg community. With these talents at its helm, Vegan Mainstream has built a cutting-edge blog that encourages conversation and healthy debate while also featuring members of the veg community.

We continue to focus on community outreach and participation in veg-friendly causes and events across the nation all throughout the year. This has enabled us to establish connections and make relationships with key leaders and resources in both the veg- and non-veg community.