

# Advertising for the Greater Good

With technology and a sense of purpose, this advertising agency has grown by more than 2,000 percent, while helping half a million of people

**X Social Media (XSM)** isn't like other marketing agencies. Sure, it delivers cost-effective results for clients at scale. But its real purpose is to help abuse survivors and victims of corporate greed find justice by connecting them to relevant civil lawsuits called mass torts. Since 2015, XSM has used Facebook and Instagram advertising to connect more than 500,000 people to legal representation across a range of injustices. XSM fights to end racial discrimination, sexual abuse, human trafficking, and injuries caused by prescription drugs and manufactured devices by holding companies and people accountable for their actions.

Founder and CEO Jacob Malherbe was inspired to start the firm after he successfully used digital media to make a difference after the BP oil spill. Today, XSM is Inc.'s 159th fastest-growing business with a 2,429 percent three-year growth rate. The driver, says Malherbe, is their mission.

## A HISTORY OF HELPING

Malherbe believes it was divine timing that he moved to the Gulf of Mexico six months before the BP oil spill of 2010. He was busy running a successful business, but he felt compelled to help his neighbors who had lost everything.

He set up a blog with advice for victims. As an immigrant from Denmark, he knew his writing wasn't perfect. But the content was useful, and the blog took off. Law firms from big cities took notice, but he chose to connect readers with local lawyers he trusted.

The experience gave Malherbe and his wife, Roseanna—now XSM's COO—the idea for the business. Malherbe notes their solution is four to five times cheaper than TV advertising because they can target so precisely on Facebook and Instagram.

They also screen people who click on the ads before connecting them with a law firm and continually invest in technology that improves lead-conversion rates.

## WHEN PURPOSE AND OPPORTUNITY OVERLAP

XSM doesn't rely on traditional business development; instead, new clients come to them. They post campaign performance on their website monthly, maintaining full transparency. The results speak for themselves. For example, in under four months, XSM connected 60,000 people affected by the opioid crisis to law firms pursuing civil action. Examples such as these explain the firm's \$52 million in 2019 revenue.

But Malherbe's most proud of making a difference. "Not only do we help victims; these lawsuits also stop the bad actions and actors." The chance to make a difference attracts a diverse team of employees, says Managing Director Lucas Gerler. He shelved the agency he founded to join XSM because he liked its higher purpose and recognized Malherbe and Roseanna's sincere passion. "I think our whole team is really happy to use our skill sets to help people while doing what we love," Gerler explains.



Jacob Malherbe, Founder

Malherbe advises fellow entrepreneurs to seek opportunities that help others while delivering real value for clients. He adds it is easy to get wrapped up in making money fast, but it is more important, and fulfilling, to drive positive change. If it is a good idea and it helps others, success will follow.

