

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT GUIDE

*little
word
studio*

#SMALLBIZSTUDIO



OVERVIEW

social media & social distancing

If a tree falls in a kitchen where you baked banana bread but no one smelled it, did you really bake banana bread? Social media has long been our go-to for connecting even with unforced distance stretched between us and our customers. In that sense, it's nothing new. We posted our food. We posted our puppies. We posted our products. Only now, in this COVID-19 existence that's blanketing the entire world like a dystopian novel come to eerie life, we're experiencing a government-mandated kind of distance. It's making us crave real trees and real forests and real banana bread shared between real friends. That kind of distance hits different. You've read the Instagram captions about the importance of staying positive (it's all true, no need to re-hash), but there is one positive to be excavated from this scenario: If you're a small business owner reading these words, social media has probably been your No. 1 lifeline to sales survival up to this very second. You're already (I'm guessing) an expert at the Insta game and maybe you don't even need a downloadable, free guide! Well, you opened it, so maybe you do. Anyway, what wisdom shall be henceforth imparted? Instead of reviewing the rudimentary of the social marketing game, you'll first get a few tips on messaging. Then, we'll dive into some ideas you might consider for social media solutions that could add some much-needed brightness to this dark, dark world. Cool? Lets go, friends ...



ON WRITING

Whelp, we're all writers now ...

Embrace your inner artist

It's tricky to talk about the vibe of your messaging on social media without first discussing the tenets of good writing. The truth is, you might be a writer but you might also not be a writer, which is totally OK. It's more likely you're a **SOMETHING ELSE THAT'S INTERESTING AND UNIQUE**. You could sell craft tacos. You could weave beautiful baskets, play the trumpet ... but words? Eh. Not your thing.

Social media is just another medium for self-expression that when considered over the aggregate of your team, becomes part of your brand identity. Half of that expression is seen through photos and videos, the other half is reflected in what you say - the copy. So, even if you're not a writer, it's helpful to learn what writers do in order to create messages that will stick.

As a totally biased writer, I'm inclined to think writers are people with an esoteric ability to take the feelings inside them – author Haruki Murakami likens these to a kind of toxin – and spill their particular brand of poison onto the page. Other people might express this emotional toxicity another way. Their toxin, for example, is released on a surfboard carving waves, or with a hammer nailing boards to rooftops or through the stroke of a paintbrush on a canvas still bare and dry. I don't know. If you're a writer, the toxin is dripped out in words.

There's another misconception about writing (and maybe all art) that the greats will readily dispel, which is the notion of a silk-gowned woman who visits you in the pearly hours of dawn with green leaves stuck to her long, auburn hair and a pretty flush to her cheeks. She whispers into your right ear on a tone smoother than the notes of a buttered harp, "Here it is. Here is the idea you need. Take this special gift from me, your Muse."

Sorry to burst any bubbles that might've been set afloat but that's garbage.

Unless you're J.K. Rowling on a train to London when by some stroke of magic the idea for a boy wizard appears in your brain, there is no Muse. There is only you, your abilities and whether you choose to evolve them toward continual improvement. Layered on top of your willingness to learn is your ability to focus on crafting a message with such intense authenticity, you can almost ensure it'll resonate with someone. (Warren Buffett said, "Intensity is the price of excellence.") Call it Writer's Block, call it a Muse, but teetering between focus and procrastination is no long-haired temptress of fates. It's you. Do the thing, reap the reward.



DO THE THING

OK, you're convinced you'll commit to at least sounding like you know how to write. Now what? Now we examine the vibe of what you'll say. This is a time to tread lightly and gently, like you're walking through that imaginary forest we spoke about earlier and it's dusk and there's a snoring giant nearby ...

BE SENSITIVE ABOUT "WORK"

Ordinarily, messages about work and productivity resonate well on social media - they position you as a thought leader eager to help others succeed. In this particular instance, ditch the productivity hacks unless you're posting ways to be more effective while working from home. Even then, depending on your target demo, be mindful of your phrasing. There are a whole lot of people furloughed or out of work right now and just the word could be an emotional trigger. Handle "work" messages and that fist pound emoji with care.

EMBRACE POSITIVITY

Remain positive. If your followers know they can turn to your page for effervescent (but not unrealistic) positivity and optimism, they'll come back day after day and probably hour after hour, to get a dose of the uplifting stuff they need. Even if you're feeling down, remain strong for those who are feeding off your strength. As a small business owner, you are no doubt a BOSS - resourceful, confident and bold. Muster your characteristic inner powerhouse - the same brand of courage that allowed you to start your business in the first place - and use it to empower others. This is your time to be spread hope in even the smallest of ways.

USE THE LIFESTYLE HACK

On those days when you really just can't do it, when the news has got you down (we all go there) or you're just feeling off, use the lifestyle hack. Post something that brings enjoyment to your life - a recipe, a DIY project, a midday exercise, anything. Find a way to tie it back to your business' value proposition and you're golden.

INFORM BUT DON'T INSTRUCT

(LOL at the hypocritical nature of this particular tip but alas ...) We have so many rules and guidelines to follow right now, the last thing we need is for our favorite workout pants brand to also tell us what to do or how we should live.

While instructing isn't a go-to strategy for your messaging at the moment, informing definitely is. If you've got knowledge of a certain community initiative (if, for instance, you're a hyper local brand like a small coffee shop), let people know. If you were previously knitting ski gloves and now you're selling homemade masks, inform customers about your pivot. Be careful not to phrase things like this very sentence - starting with an action verb that might sound too preachy. Try using the pronoun "we" over "you." Favor "might" over "should," and solicit advice as readily as you give it. (E.g. If you recommend watching Tiger King to de-stress, ask your followers what they're watching to unwind at the end of the day.)

CURATE IF YOU CAN'T CREATE

And if you really, really have no clue what to post for the day, curating is perfectly fine. Post a quote from your go-to yogi or favorite author. Repost (with permission) a photo that fits your aesthetic.

IDEAS!

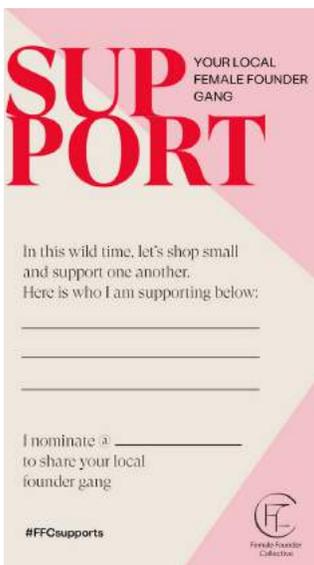
Enough about words. Here are five ideas to try ...

Create a tag/fill-in-the-blank Instagram story template for:

- Your daily routine
- Five things you're grateful for
- Local businesses to support (they'll definitely repost to extend your organic reach)
- Local restaurants doing delivery (again, you'll get reposts)
- Local dogs to follow (fun reposts here to open your demo to dog lovers)
- Six fashion influencers with inspiring feeds (they might even repost)
- Seven home decor experts with DIY advice (they also might repost)
- Three DJs hosting on Instagram Live sessions (repost, repost ...)

reminder to include:

- Your Instagram handle
- Your hashtag (if you have one)
- Your brand identity (colors, font, logo, vibe)
- Enough space for users to write and tag accounts
- At least 3 opportunities to tag accounts
- A nomination section or challenge section to keep the template going
- Right size of template for Instagram stories (1080 x 1920 px)
- Easily readable prompts (not too small or in a strange font that nobody can read)
- Something different from templates you've seen before, even if it's just one different question or fill-in-the-blank



create your template with:



Canva - Free but Pro version (\$120/year) recommended!



Over (app) - can start a free trial or ~\$4.99/month

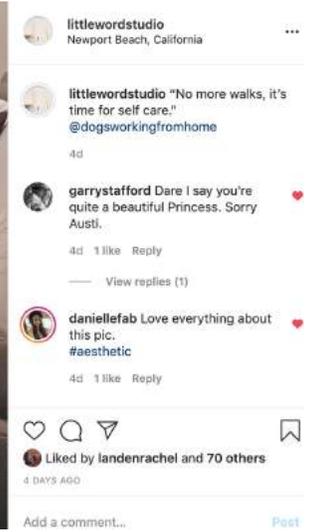


Unfold (app) - free but some templates cost ~\$1.99

IDEAS!

Use humor to create engagement:

- Describe a quarantine fail meal
- Describe a home organizing project fail
- Tell me something your kid did but change "kid" to "coworker"
- Comment below with the number of hours you've watched Netflix this week
- Tag us in a photo of your dog confused about why you're STILL home
 - SIDE NOTE: If you post a photo of your dog, share it to your story and tag @dogsworkingfromhome for a chance at a story re-share
 - SIDE NOTE PT. 2: When all else fails, dress up your dog and post if it feels right.



by the way ...

This method only works if you're willing to get authentic with the messiness of your life. If it feels off brand to post about your own lifestyle or put an unfiltered image on your beautiful feed, skip to the next idea.

by the way pt. 2



While scheduling content and having a content calendar is usually best practice for social media, right now, skip the scheduling. Who knows what tomorrow's news may bring and you don't want a photo on your feed encouraging people to dine out or take an action they legally can't.

IDEAS!

Community engagement = wins for all.



Team up with a local micro-influencer (fitness instructor, chef, artist, etc.) to create a charity initiative or host a live class.

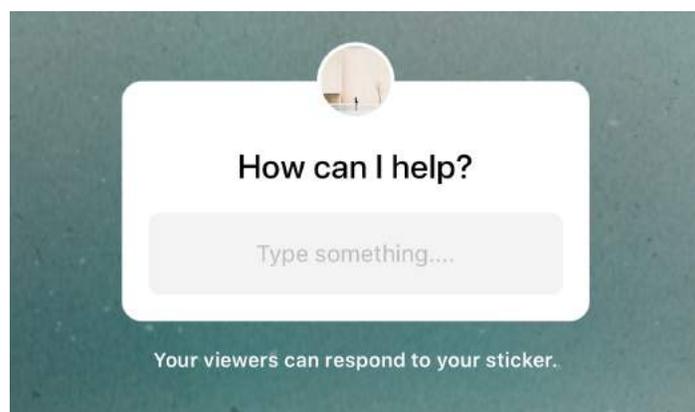
Most likely, there's someone in your sphere with 2,000-10,000 followers on Instagram or Facebook who is out of work, looking to engage and could use some extra promotion. Team up with a micro-influencer you're connected with (or DM a few with your pitch) and ask if you can collaborate. This collaboration might be a live class you can both promote to your followers or perhaps an entire initiative (e.g. for every purchase, you get 10% off a virtual fitness class). Get creative with the collaboration and make sure it benefits you and your core customers.

Create a marketplace on your website.

You might have already started a dedicated URL for all things COVID-19 (local resources, guides, etc.) This idea isn't that - this is creating a marketplace on your website for either all local businesses, businesses you work with (e.g. vendors or partners) or one particular industry that aligns with yours. For instance, you might start a Food Marketplace listing all food establishments open right now. If you're a national brand, you might list some female-founded businesses providing free shipping or significant discounts. A marketplace gives other businesses exposure, positions you as a hub of curated intelligence and gives customers a reason to check back often to your website. Push updates to the marketplace across social media platforms. Create an Instagram template to share new marketplace listings. Post them on LinkedIn and tag the company's page then encourage your connections to provide suggestions for more businesses to include. Tweet each new marketplace listing ... the list goes on, as does the traffic you're generating to your site. (Make sure somewhere on your site is a link back to your sales/services page, too.)

Ask how you can help.

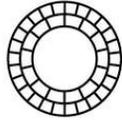
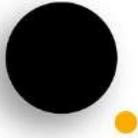
This one's pretty simple. Musa Tariq, head of marketing at Airbnb Experiences (formerly of Burberry, Nike and a host of others), recently tweeted Instagram asking they change the copy on the question sticker to: "How can I help?" AND THEY DID. (#Inspiration.) So, take advantage of the verbiage provided by this modern-day marketing guru and post the sticker several times each week. You'll be surprised at the content strategies your own tribe of followers will come up with.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Apps for photo editing and filters

Prequel



VSCO



A COLOR STORY

Apps for video editing



Splice



iMovie 4+
Turn videos into movie magic
Apple
#21 in Photo & Video
★★★★ 3.9, 42.3K Ratings
Free

Content Collaboration



MOE

HubSpot

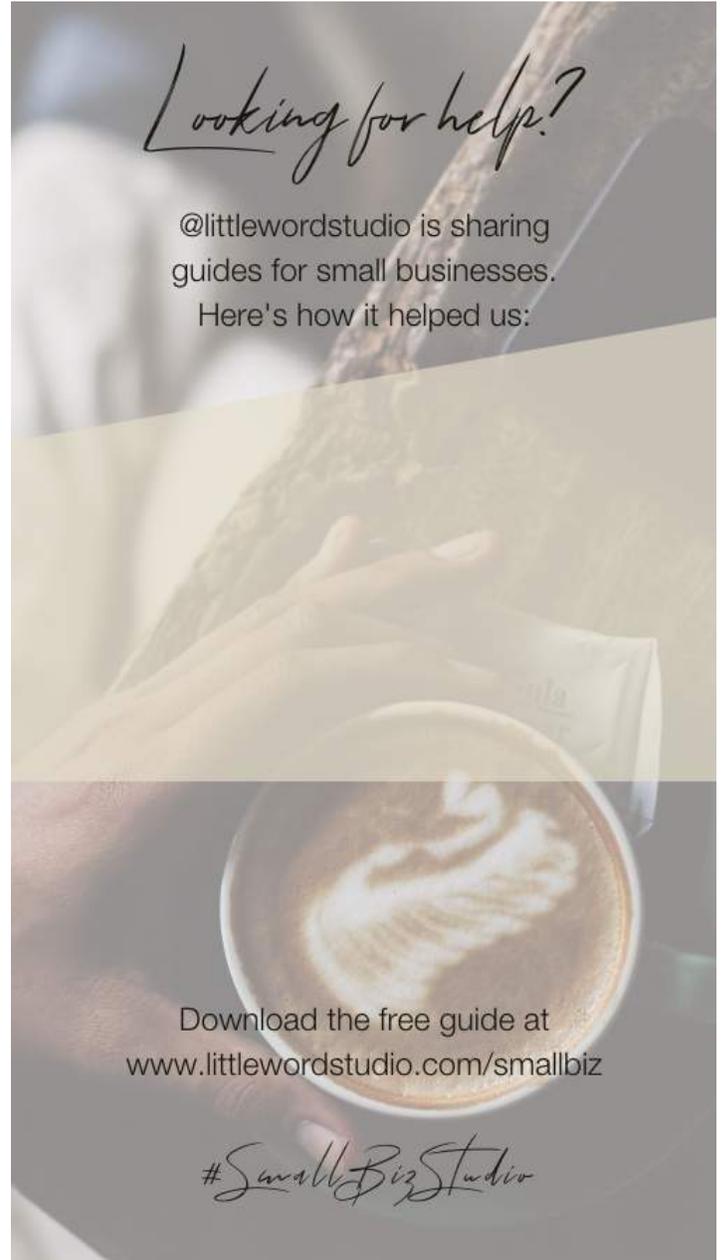
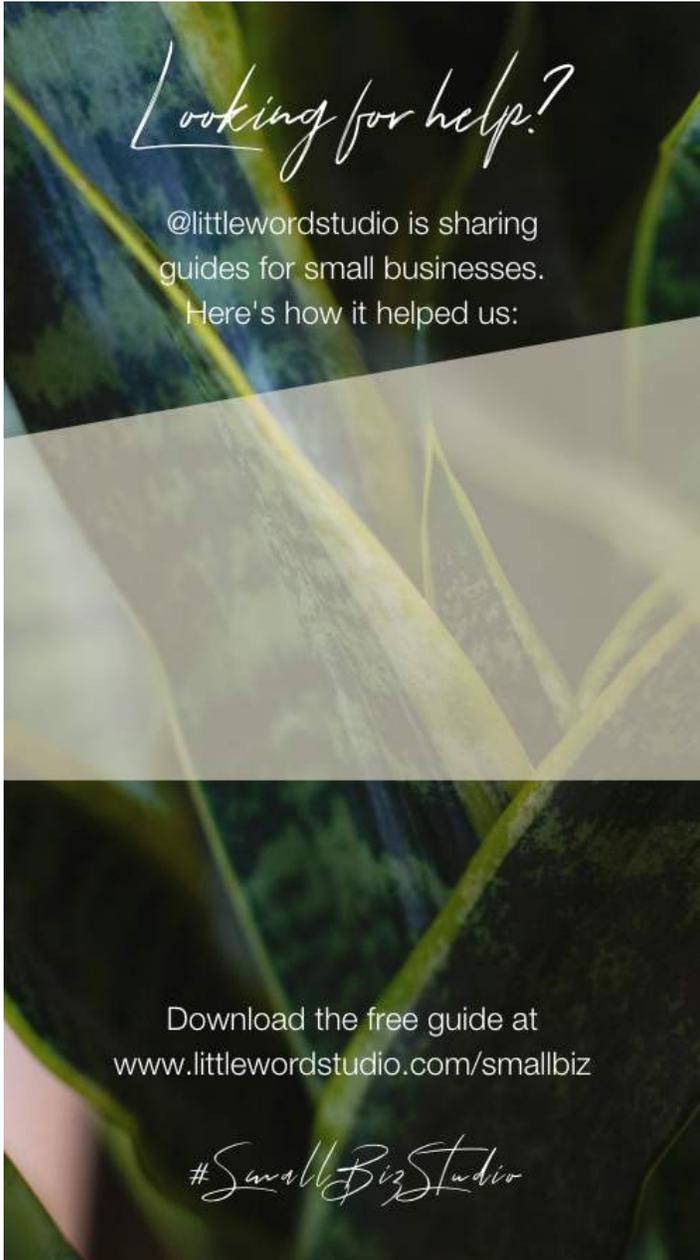
Further Reading & Education

- www.later.com/blog - For practical, applicable tips on the specifics of social media marketing
- www.fohr.com (navigate to "A Drink With James" section) - For influencer marketing best practices
- www.facebook.com/business/learn - For FREE (yep!) classes on Instagram and Facebook marketing
- www.littlewordstudio.com/blog - For blog posts written by little word studio founder Melissa Kandel shamless plug but ~_(\ツ)_/~



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Questions? Get in touch:

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