

#SJMCSOCIAL

Writing Workshop

Social Media Writing Guide



As you already know, but maybe had not stopped to think about, each social network has its own nuances, strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the content we create on these different networks needs to respect the nuances, accentuate the strengths and stay away from the weaknesses. Here are some guidelines for producing content on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Instagram Stories. These are not rules you always have to follow (and they change over time), but they will generally guide you to the best results.

Writing for Facebook



Content Guidelines

Length: Facebook has a post length maximum of around 63,000 characters. Research shows Facebook posts with 80 or fewer characters get 66% more engagement. (Longer posts will show “Click More” for users to see entire post.)

Visuals: Facebook has a strong focus on photos and video. The platform supports vertical or horizontal photos and video. Video often looks better when done horizontally, but vertical videos tend to get more engagement. Facebook also supports animated gifs by copying and pasting the URL into the post box (usually - you’ll get frustrated with this). Facebook Live supports live broadcasts, and those broadcasts then save as a video file on the page after they’re completed.

Video length: Facebook has a maximum length of 45 minutes for a video length. However, research shows videos get the most views and engagement when around one minute in length. Because Facebook videos autoplay silently, they should be produced to feature the best content right away and to be consumed without audio.

Emojis: Facebook has its own emojis available to use on a desktop. If you copy and paste an emoji to Facebook, it will convert into the closest version of Facebook’s set.

Hashtags: While they are available for usage on Facebook, hashtags have little impact here. If you do decide to use them, limit to 1-2 per post.

Writing for Twitter



Content Guidelines

Length: The network famously doubled its maximum tweet length from 140 to 280 characters a few years ago. Research shows that tweets between 71-100 characters get the most retweets and 17 percent more engagement.

Visuals: Twitter used to be a network of text and links. This is, obviously, no longer the case. The platform supports photos, videos, animated gifs and live broadcasts (via Periscope). Twitter's embracing of the animated gif helped fuel its role as a place for comedy and snark. Links now auto-populate with a preview card, instead of just showing up as a URL.

Video length: Twitter videos have a maximum length of 140 seconds.

Emojis: Tweets support emojis and bitmoji. Emojis can also be used in display names.

Hashtags: Hashtags were invented by Twitter users and continue to be a vital part of the platform. Research shows it's best to limit to 1-2 hashtags per post, and hashtags that are six characters or less tend to perform the best.

Writing for Instagram



Content Guidelines

Length: Instagram has a limit of 2,200 characters per post. However, here - more than the other networks - brevity is the key to success. Research shows the highest-performing posts are around 150 characters, but the best advice for Instagram, in general, is the shorter the better. That's because users scroll through Instagram much faster than the other networks. You have to catch their attention instantly if it's going to happen. Instagram will cut off longer posts with an ellipsis.

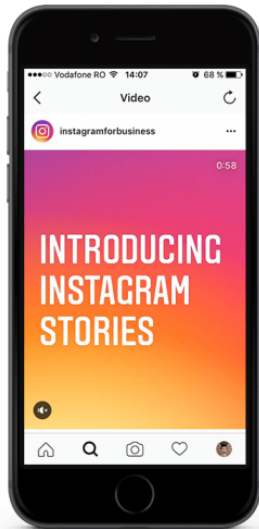
Visuals: Instagram is all about visuals - QUALITY visuals. It supports vertical, horizontal and square photos and videos. (Instagram's best advice is to go square if you're unsure.)

Video length: Instagram has a maximum length of 60 seconds for a video. Videos autoplay silently, so they should be produced with eye-catching visuals off the top. Creators should also assume videos will be watched silently. Long-form video is supported with IGTV.

Emojis: Emojis bring 🔥 to your content game on Instagram. They work very well here.

Hashtags: There's a maximum of 30 hashtags per post or reply. Research shows nine hashtags drives the highest engagement, but Instagram says four or five is the magic number. Regardless of which one you go with, resist the urge to over-hashtag your posts. Also, have a strategy for where your hashtags will go. Either space down with dots or put in a reply.

Writing for Instagram Stories



Content Guidelines

Visuals: Visuals are everything on Instagram Stories. You can use either photos or video. Vertical is preferred, but horizontal content will be shown with blurred boxes above and below. Live broadcasts are also possible via Instagram Stories. Videos can feature Boomerangs, focus, rewind, superzoom or music. You can also create screens of text with one of four color combinations.

Content length: Photos will be shown for seven seconds on Instagram Stories. Videos have a maximum length of 15 seconds.

Extras: Instagram Stories has a seemingly unlimited number of “extras.” You can type on top of a photo or video using one of five fonts. You can draw or doodle on top of content, as well. You can use a geotag of your location, mention another user, embed hashtags, add animated gifs, feature music on top of your photo or video, add a timestamp, create a poll, have a sliding emoji poll, ask for questions from the viewers, add the temperature, add the day, add a selfie or select from a number of pre-produced phrases or emojis. Lenses and filters are also available.