LAST UPDATED MARCH 2020

SOCIAL STRATEGY GUIDE

FOR CITIES & DISTRICTS

CivicBrand

THIS SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY BOOK BELONGS TO

I WORK FOR THE CITY OF

MY POSITION IS

WHEN IT COMES TO SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CITIES, I KNOW

☐ NOTHING ☐ SOME ☐ A LOT

MY GOALS FOR THIS BOOK ARE

IF MISPLACED, PLEASE CONTACT ME AT

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CHAPTER ONE

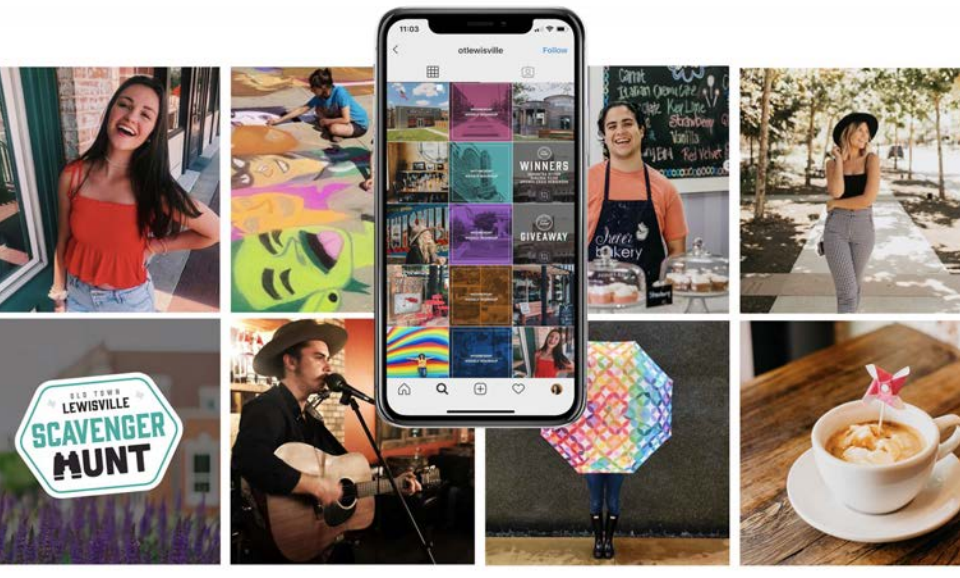
REAL PEOPLE, CONSISTENCY, USER-GENERATED CONTENT, LOCATION & USER TAGGING, HASHTAGS

GENERAL POSTING GUIDELINES

for any social media outlet for your city

REAL PEOPLE

You may feel that stock photos look better, or that using them will save you time and money instead of hiring a photographer. However, using real photos will make your posts feel more authentic. You have a community of real people, so use them.



CONSISTENCY

Be consistent in how frequently you are posting, the types of content you are posting, and the look and feel of your social posts. Build a consistent theme and style for your social channels and posts. Make sure that the images you post look good together and are edited in the same style, and that the copy of your posts is written in the same voice and tone. On Instagram, plan your feed layout and consider how your posts will look as a whole or side by side. We recommend using a feed planning app such as Planoly, Unum or Plann to visually plan the look and feel of your photos before you post them.

It's also important to be consistent and timely in your responses to comments posted, questions asked, posts you've been tagged in and direct messages from visitors.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Some of your best content is user-generated content. To see what user-generated content is out there, search your locations for what's being posted there and search hashtags that have do with your area. Always message the user to get permission to use or share their image. If they grant you permission to use their photo, ask them to email you the original photos they used in their post and ask if they would like for you to tag them in the post either as the photographer or in the post.

LOCATION & USER TAGGING

Add your location to Instagram posts so your content will come up in searches for your location, and so that visitors can click directly on your location from posts. Be sure and tag all accounts involved in the post—businesses, organizations, associations, photographers and people.

otlewisville • Following
Old Town Lewisville

otlewisville The lovely @proofingit brightening up our Monday🌈
.
Tag #oldtownlewisville to be featured on our page!

32w

otlewisville •
•
•
•
•
#exploredfw #dfwevents #dallaseats #bridesofnorthtexas #dallasfoodie #dallasbrunch #dfwfoodie #dfwhappenings #visitdallas #dmagazine #igdallas #lewisvilletx #lewisvilletexas #lewisville #dallasbloggers

Liked by **ryanshorttx** and **others**
JUNE 24, 2019

Add a comment... Post

lakefrontlittleelm • Follow
Hula Hut Little Elm

lakefrontlittleelm Shoutout to the @lshsrangers football team for making a visit to the #LakefrontLittleElm this weekend! Wishing you all a great season! ⭐💙

23w

elizabeth_fineapple Cute boys!

23w Reply

Liked by **miss.kinsey** and **others**
AUGUST 26, 2019

Add a comment... Post

HASHTAGS

Hashtags are always relevant on Instagram. Sometimes it does make sense to use them on Twitter, but use your best judgment—don't use them just because a platform allows.

Use hashtags to make your content searchable and invite new people to find and engage with your posts. Come up with a hashtag that describes your city/district that you can own, and ask your audience to start using it when they post photos in your location.

Only use 1-2 hashtags in the actual caption, and then post the rest in a comment on the post. Research each hashtag you are going to use and make sure they will drive traffic, but are also related to the post and your area.

Brainstorm some hashtags that might work for your city.

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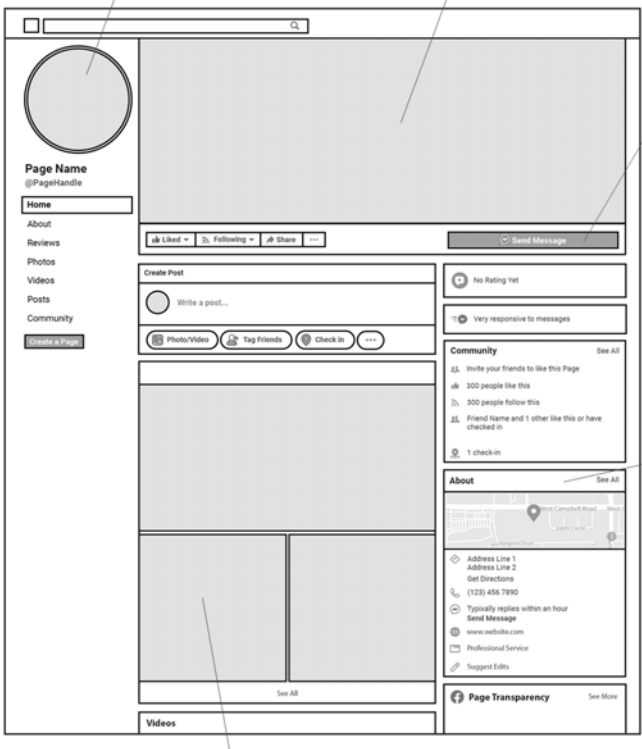
Diagram of a Facebook Business Page

Profile Photo
Profile photos should be recognizable. Try to make all social media profile images consistent.

Cover Photo
Should be a high-quality image or graphic that represents the city.

Call- to-Action
Make sure the button at the top of the page is implemented.



About Section
The about section should be accurate and completely filled out.

Photos
The photos are one of the first things visitors see. All photos should be "on-brand."

CHAPTER TWO

GIVEAWAYS, TAKEOVERS, ROUNDUPS, STORIES, INSTAGRAMMABLE SPOTS

CONTENT IDEAS

you can start implementing on your city accounts today

GIVEAWAYS

Giveaways and contests are a great way to increase engagement, gain new followers and obtain user-generated content. They're also an excellent way to promote and support the businesses in your destination while rewarding your residents and followers.

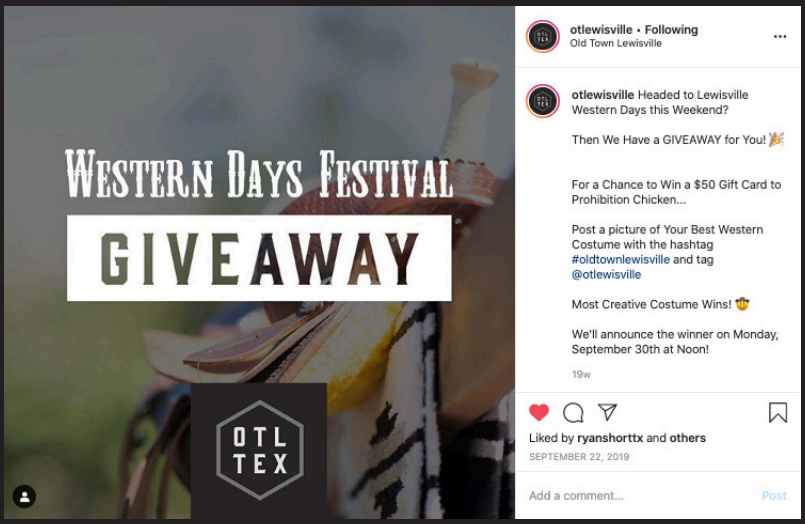
TYPES OF CONTESTS/GIVEAWAYS:

- Like a post and/or comment on a post to win
- Plan a scavenger hunt, with clues of places to take photos in your destination
- Write a review of a local business to be entered to win
- Hold a photo contest. Give a prize to the most creative photo, the photo with the most likes, etc.
- Launch a survey to understand perceptions about your city or district. Respondents have a chance to win the grand prize.

PRIZE IDEAS:

- A gift card to a local establishment
- Gift baskets with items from a few local businesses
- Tickets to a performance
- Dinner for 2 at a local restaurant
- Branded apparel
- Stay-cation package for your city

HULA HUT
giveaway
Write a review and win
A FREE DATE NIGHT FOR TWO
the lakefront
LITTLE ELM
lakefrontlittleelm • Follow
Lakefront at Little Elm
lakefrontlittleelm IT'S TIME FOR A GIVEAWAY!
.
Love is in the air this February so we want to hear all the reasons you love Lakefront at Little Elm!
.
Leave a review of your time in Lakefront at Little Elm for a chance to win a FREE Date Night for Two at Hula Hut Little Elm.
.
How to Enter:
🌟Leave a Review on the @lakefrontlittlelm Facebook page about your time in Lakefront
🌟Comment on this post who you'd bring on your date night out at @hulahut_littleelm
.
Liked by miss.kinsey and others
FEBRUARY 7, 2019
Add a comment...
Post


WESTERN DAYS FESTIVAL
GIVEAWAY
OTL TEX
otlewisville • Following
Old Town Lewisville
otlewisville Headed to Lewisville Western Days this Weekend?
Then We Have a GIVEAWAY for You!🎉
For a Chance to Win a $50 Gift Card to Prohibition Chicken...
Post a picture of Your Best Western Costume with the hashtag #oldtownlewisville and tag @otlewisville
Most Creative Costume Wins! 🤠
We'll announce the winner on Monday, September 30th at Noon!
19w
Liked by ryanshorttx and others
SEPTEMBER 22, 2019
Add a comment...
Post

GIVEAWAY PLANNER

GIVEAWAY THEME PRIZE TIME OF YEAR

LOCAL BUSINESSES TO INCLUDE

GIVEAWAY THEME PRIZE TIME OF YEAR

LOCAL BUSINESSES TO INCLUDE

GIVEAWAY THEME PRIZE TIME OF YEAR

LOCAL BUSINESSES TO INCLUDE

GIVEAWAY THEME PRIZE TIME OF YEAR

LOCAL BUSINESSES TO INCLUDE

GIVEAWAY THEME PRIZE TIME OF YEAR

LOCAL BUSINESSES TO INCLUDE

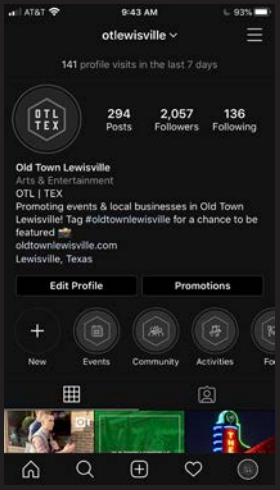
TAKEOVERS

Takeovers expand your reach to new audiences. It gives your followers an authentic experience of your city through the eyes of an insider or from a different point of view.

The person you pick for the takeover could be an owner or employee of a local business, a local influencer or well known figure in your community, a local student, or simply a fan of your city. You'll want to make a plan of what channels they'll take over, guidelines for frequency and type of content posted, and how you will change passwords or share access with them for the duration of the takeover.

ROUNDUPS

For cities and places, there are lots of roundup type posts you can do—fun things to do in your city, food/drink specials, weekly happenings and events, live music and entertainment, shopping discounts, etc. They are valuable to your visitors because they receive a summary of information in one place, and can be repeated weekly or monthly. Set up a theme and format for your recurring roundup posts and make templates that can be created quickly and easily customized.



STORIES

Instagram Stories are a great way to get a lot of content out there, especially user-generated content you've been tagged in, without feeling like you're annoying your followers or posting too much. Using stickers on your stories to ask questions and put out polls is an easy way to start a conversation and interact with your followers. Since stories are temporary and only last 24 hours, they're a good way to promote time-sensitive offers or events happening within that time period.

You can save Stories to your profile by creating a Highlight. We suggest creating icons for the Highlight cover image to help your followers easily find what they are looking for.

INSTAGRAMMABLE SPOTS

Most anything can become an Instagram-worthy spot, such as murals, chairs and benches, backdrop banners, sidewalk chalk, art installations or lights, but there are a couple of things you can do to encourage visitors to snap and share photos at your Instagrammable spots. Use a unique hashtag that describes your destination and place the hashtag on or near your Instagrammable spots. An example is including your hashtag in a mural.

CIVICBRAND TIP:

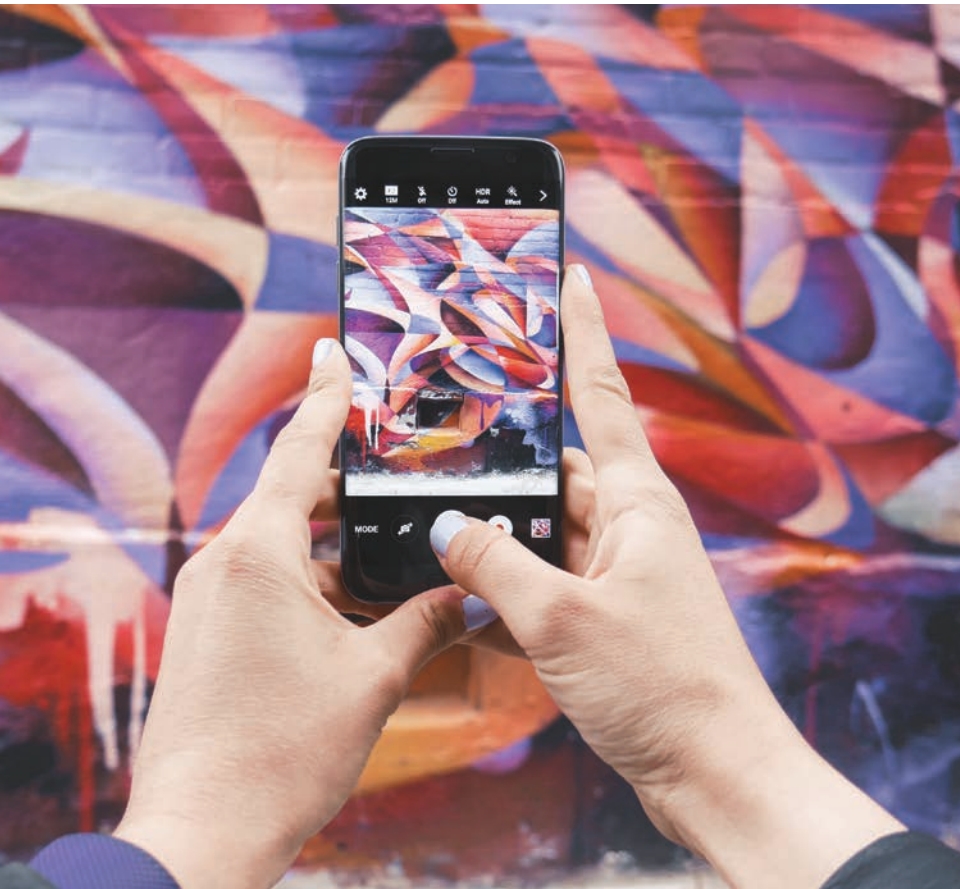
Encourage visitors to snap and share photos at your Instagrammable spots with instructions and a hashtag!

CHAPTER THREE

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE

SETTING AND MEASURING GOALS

for any social media outlet for your city



Goals for your city or district's social channels can be ambiguous and difficult to measure. It's hard to accurately gauge the amount of views or engagements on Instagram, for example, that turn into actual visitors and, ultimately, dollars. You can schedule regular intercept surveys to get a sense of what motivated people to visit or measure their awareness of your social channels, but in the end those numbers will never be 100% exact.

Instead of focusing solely on whether or not your social media efforts result in visitors and generated revenue, we recommend focusing on other quantitative and

QUANTITATIVE

Here's where you can get geeky with the data. As mentioned before, it's hard to track how many views on social turn into visitors. Instead, track things like post reach, impressions, engagement rate and follower growth. You can measure these things month-over-month and year-over-year and establish your own benchmarks for success, then watch how they grow or change, giving you a sense of what type of content resonates most with your audience. Below are a couple formulas to help you get started.

% Increase in Followers = [(number of followers at the end of current period **-** number of followers at the end of last period) **/** number of followers at the end of last period] **x 100**

Engagement rate* = (total engagements / total reach) x 100

*Note: Some resources tell you to calculate engagement rate based on the number of followers your account has. Others say it should be based on generated impressions. We like to calculate it based on the number of unique users actually seeing your content (reach), because we feel it provides us with a more accurate measure of engagement.

QUALITATIVE

Quantifiable metrics are definitely important, but so are more intangibles like photo/social copy quality and tone of voice.

Are the images you share pixelated or fuzzy?

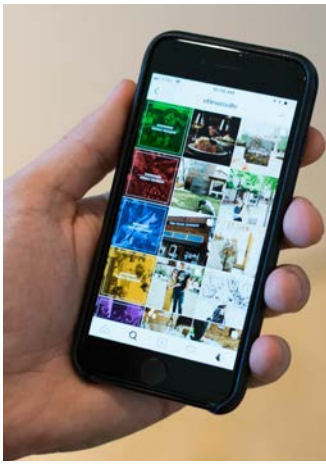
Does the tone of voice you use change from post to post?

Does each image have the same look and feel?

Is your copy on brand?

CIVICBRAND TIP:

Always have the same person post content to create a consistent voice and look.



GOAL SHEET

WRITE THE DATE AND YOUR CURRENT NUMBERS FOR REACH, IMPRESSIONS, ENGAGEMENT AND FOLLOWERS ON THE LEFT. THEN ON THE RIGHT, WRITE YOUR GOAL NUMBERS FOR EACH AND THE DATE YOU'D LIKE TO REACH THEM.

NOW _____/_____/_____	GOAL _____/_____/_____
POST REACH	
IMPRESSIONS	
ENGAGEMENT RATE	
FOLLOWERS	

WHAT ARE YOUR QUALITATIVE GOALS FOR YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA?

MEASURING INFLUENCER CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

If the goal of your campaign was to generate awareness of your destination, the metrics you will need to focus on in order to determine success are impressions and reach.

If you were looking to improve your city's connection with your potential audience or local community online, measure success based on your number of engagements and your engagement rate.

For campaigns that have a more tangible goal such as getting more people to sign up for your city's newsletter or reading a blog post on your website, tracking things like click-through rate or form fills is your measure of success.

CAMPAIGN SUCCESS PLANNER

CAMPAIGN NAME DATE

.....

PARTNERS

.....

DESCRIBE THE CONTENT OF YOUR CAMPAIGN

.....

.....

.....

LIST 4 METRICS YOU'LL USE TO MEASURE YOUR CAMPAIGN SUCCESS. THEN, WRITE THE GOAL NUMBERS YOU WANT. AT THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN,COME BACK AND WRITE THE DATE WITH YOUR ACTUAL NUMBERS TO SEE HOW YOU SUCCEEDED!

METRICS	GOAL NUMBERS	ACTUALS _____/_____/_____
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

CHAPTER FOUR

LOOK AT YOUR OWN FOLLOWERS, EXPLORE HASHTAGS & LOCATIONS, MEASURING CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

HOW TO FIND INFLUENCERS

for your city and measure their success

In general, we find working with nano and micro-influencers to be much more valuable than working with mega-influencers or celebrities. Micro-influencers can even be locals in your community who are naturally influential, rather than those trying to be "influencers." That can actually make them more authentic, and they might be willing to partner with you just for some free stuff! If you have to pay someone thousands of dollars to post on Instagram, chances are the ROI just isn't going to be there.

And yes, you should have a contract with every influencer you work with.

LOOK AT YOUR OWN FOLLOWERS

The best place to start seeking out qualified influencers is directly within your own followings. Scan through your current followers to look for promising individuals or nano/micro-influencers who may already be following your city's accounts.

EXPLORE HASHTAGS AND LOCATIONS

Take advantage of destination-specific hashtags and location check-ins on Instagram and Twitter. You can use a broad search for your city in general (for example the location tag Dallas, Texas) or you can look to see who has tagged posts at certain locations within your city or district. You can also explore hashtag strategies. For example, if you're looking for influencers to help you promote an upcoming food festival, searching #DallasFoodBlogger may help you locate the perfect influencers to contact for this opportunity.

INFLUENCER LIST

LOOK THROUGH YOUR RECENT POSTS AND FIND LOCAL RESIDENTS WHO ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGING WITH YOUR POSTS.

@ @

@ @

@ @

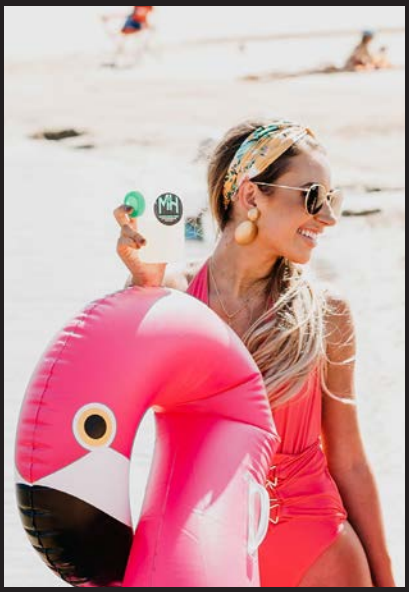
SEARCH POPULAR LOCAL HASTAGS AND LIST LOCAL RESIDENTS THAT YOU'D LIKE TO PARTNER WITH ON AN UPCOMING CAMPAIGN OR POST.

@ @

@ @

@ @

INFLUENCER POST IDEAS



You can create custom UTM codes specific to each influencer to help you measure how much traffic their content generated, or create custom landing pages specifically for visitors brought in from influencer campaigns. You should also take full advantage of Google Analytics' traffic metrics in order to pinpoint and determine where traffic has funneled in from. Compare your performance before the influencer campaign began and after it concluded, looking for stark differences in new visitors, referral sources, and total page views.

INVOLVING LOCAL BUSINESSES

to create a lively and attractive community

You don't need to rely solely on the social content you are able to create or on the events/promotions that your destination organizes. Instead, develop mutually beneficial relationships with the business owners in your area. By sharing and promoting their content, their events or specials, and business as a whole, reach a wider audience. But in turn, your destination looks more lively and attractive on social and you also have more things to fill up your content calendar. However it should be noted that the local businesses you partner with should align with your destination's brand.

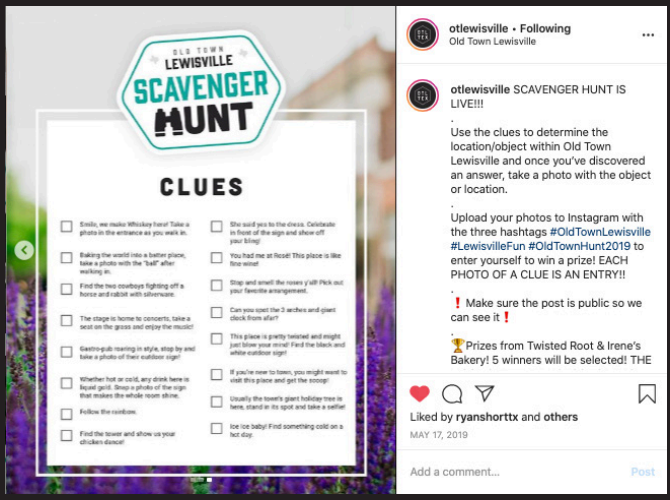
The key to effectively involving local businesses in your destination's social efforts is to first develop a strong in-person relationship with them. Allow them to put a face to your name. When they feel more connected to and supported by the city, they are much more likely to engage with you and actively participate in your strategy.

HERE A FEW WAYS YOU CAN STRENGTHEN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE BUSINESS OWNERS IN YOUR AREA:

Hold quarterly roundtables to discuss initiatives, coordinate events and empower them with a sense of ownership in the community.

Run contests and giveaways for your followers in which the prize is a gift (or gifts) from a local business. Establish a dedicated budget to buy the prize items from the business—don't just ask them to give it to you for free. For example, if the giveaway grand prize is a $100 gift card to a local restaurant, walk into the restaurant and buy a gift card for $100.

2019 LAKEFRONT
scavenger
HUNT
MAY 17TH - MAY 19TH
lakefrontlittleelm • Follow
Lakefront at Little Elm
lakefrontlittleelm Here are your clues for the #LakefrontInstaHunt2019!
You have until Sunday, May 19th at 6pm to complete as many clues as possible! We'll be choosing winners based on creativity and the number of clues solved, NOT who finishes first, so what are you waiting for? Get out to Lakefront and get started!
PRIZES
There are several prizes up for grabs!
1st place: $50 @hulahut_littleelm Gift Card
2nd place: $25 @margaritahut2go Gift Card
3rd place: $25 @chills360littleelm Gift Card
Liked by bighairbrisa and others
MAY 17, 2019
Add a comment...
Post


OLD TOWN
LEWISVILLE
SCAVENGER
HUNT
CLUES
Smile, we make Whiskey here! Take a photo in the entrance as you walk in.
Baking the world into a better place, take a photo with the "ball" after walking in.
Find the two cowboys fighting off a horse and rabbit with silverware.
The stage is home to concerts, take a seat on the grass and enjoy the music!
Gastro-pub roaring in style, stop by and take a photo of their outdoor sign!
Whether hot or cold, any drink here is liquid gold. Snap a photo of the sign that makes the whole room shine.
Follow the rainbow.
Find the tower and show us your chicken dance!
She said yes to the dress. Celebrate in front of the sign and show off your bling!
You had me at Rosé! This place is like fine wine!
Stop and smell the roses y'all! Pick out your favorite arrangement.
Can you spot the 3 arches and giant clock from afar?
This place is pretty twisted and might just blow your mind! Find the black and white outdoor sign!
If you're new to town, you might want to visit this place and get the scoop!
Usually the town's giant holiday tree is here, stand in its spot and take a selfie!
Ice ice baby! Find something cold on a hot day.
otlewisville • Following
Old Town Lewisville
otlewisville SCAVENGER HUNT IS LIVE!!!
Use the clues to determine the location/object within Old Town Lewisville and once you've discovered an answer, take a photo with the object or location.
Upload your photos to Instagram with the three hashtags #OldTownLewisville #LewisvilleFun #OldTownHunt2019 to enter yourself to win a prize! EACH PHOTO OF A CLUE IS AN ENTRY!!
Make sure the post is public so we can see it
Prizes from Twisted Root & Irene's Bakery! 5 winners will be selected! THE
Liked by ryanshorttx and others
MAY 17, 2019
Add a comment...
Post

When your destination holds an event, inform them well ahead of time and ask if they'd like to capitalize on the people that will be in the area by offering a special or coupon. Promote their specials on social.

Offer an Accelerator program. At CivicBrand, we work with cities and districts to develop a monthly budget for an Accelerator program that helps local businesses with their marketing efforts. We work with local businesses owners to develop and implement a marketing plan that can take their business to the next level. This is a benefit for the destination because it increases reach and awareness and often gives the destination higher quality content to share on social. Contact us to start an Accelerator program in your city.

CivicBrand

CivicBrand is an agency with over a decade of experience in research, branding, consulting, design, and marketing. We're a team of strategists, creatives and storytellers with a passion for helping communities tell their story.

We work directly with Cities, Economic Development offices, DMOs including Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVBs), Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations to develop and implement branding, engagement and destination marketing strategies.

Interested in working with us to develop and implement an effective destination marketing strategy? We'd love to hear from you.

Reach us at **hello@civicbrand.com** or by visiting **civicbrand.com/contact.**

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