

Social Media Guidelines

1: Social Media Values

Quantity, Quality, Guides

Why?

Ever paused over an Instagram caption and wondered how to cram in all the info needed without it reading like the world's most boring advertisement? Or scrolled through your social media feed and felt like screaming loudly, "Can somebody please post a different photo?"

We've all been there; hence, the need for this guide.

The plan is that this social media style guide will help us communicate more clearly and at a more consistently high standard. It will help to clarify who should communicate what, when, and how often. It will promote quality over quantity.

It will be a resource that can be turned to for help when we find ourselves asking aloud, "What's the right way to say...?"

This style guide is detailed and includes boundaries. It is a tool designed to help those who have been entrusted to steward the platform of influence that has been built over time and that we hope will keep reaching those outside our doors beyond our time.

So embrace this style guide, social-media-loving friends. Let it become the true north of your social media work.

Social Media = Ministry

Social media isn't just a place for us to announce what we are doing. It's a place for us to reach our community and the world with the love of Christ.

With intentionality and effort, social media is a ministry. As we shape who Bethany Church is online, it's important to keep the following values in mind.

Humanize Bethany Church.

Show the people of our church how God is working through us right now. Bethany is about people and community, so be intentional about sharing faces, people, and stories in an authentic, human way.

Share with excellence.

Every post, picture, and tweet is worth being excellent. Social media may be the first or only way someone learns about our church, so create a worthwhile impression through interesting images, compelling content, and a consistent presence, while maintaining the standards in this guide.

Invest in our relationships.

It's not broadcast media—it's social media. Let's make our social media efforts genuinely social through interaction. Foster community through timely responses, encouragement, and prayer.

Collaborate consistently.

Set up a regular dialogue and workflow between those leading social media efforts on behalf of your ministry/campus/event.

We have a team ready to come alongside your efforts, but keep in mind that timely requests not only help the workflow of the Creative Team, but also yield success in effective marketing campaigns and strategic social media presence.

2: Accounts

Our social media accounts are organized in a particular way for two specific reasons:

1. To communicate who we are as a church and what Jesus is doing among us effectively.

2. To express this in a way that connects with various demographic groups, providing a path of connection to the church.

New social media accounts must be approved by the social media director, marketing, and Creative Team and cannot be created without approval.

Local Accounts

As we move forward and expand our reach, it is important to remember the focus of a campus account is communicating what is happening at that particular campus. Rather than reposting exactly what has been posted by the official Bethany account, a campus account should communicate campus-related specifics. It is also of importance to assess that the quality, quantity, and intention of all our posts match with our main accounts (Bethany Church).

Please note: Campus accounts are welcome to promote the content of any of our Bethany accounts (such as summer camps or Creative Team nights). However, it is best that the content be repackaged as appropriate for the campus account rather than simply reposted.

For example, "Bold Night is tonight at the Houma campus!"

It is our heart to come alongside you to communicate what is going on and the things God is doing at every Bethany campus. As a Bethany team, we accomplish this effectively by looking ahead and avoiding any last-minute promotional efforts.

Campus Accounts

A campus account is considered a local account and should include the following:

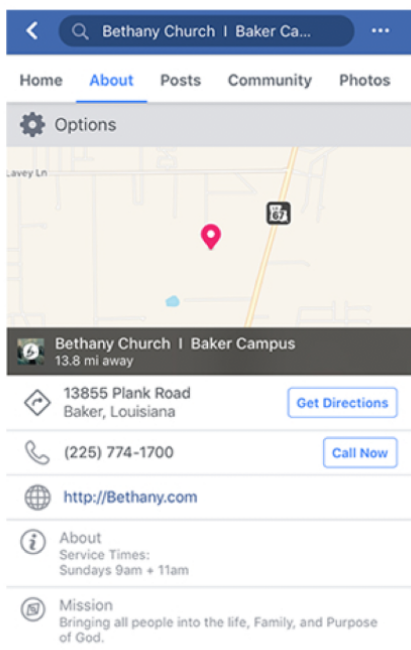
1. An official Bethany logo that has been customized by the Creative Team to be used as the profile picture.
2. Handle (username) - Include "Bethany Church" and the campus name/location. If that is not possible (with character limits), remove the word "campus," but otherwise, it should be included in the title/subtext.



3. Title (Profile Name) - include "Bethany Church" and the Campus name/location.

The Facebook formatting standard should be: Bethany Church | Baker Campus

4. Bio / Subtext / About - This section should give the most important information for a campus, including location, service times, a contact phone number and a link (where possible) to our website - bethany.com



Ministry + Team Accounts

Ministry and team accounts are considered local accounts that have the ability to communicate to a global audience about our church culture, events, values, etc. These accounts should include the following:

1. An official logo that has been customized by the Creative Team to distinctively represent the ministry or team and will appeal to the account's audience and be used as a profile picture.
2. Handle (username) - This is encouraged but not required to include "Bethany" in the handle. Certain ministries have a specific name as part of their identity; for example, @boldmovement, @bethanyallaccess, etc.



3. Title (profile name) - This is encouraged but not required to include "Bethany" in the handle.
4. Bio/subtext/about - This section allows each account to communicate what/who they are and how they connect. It can relate back to Bethany and must include the "Bethany" name within the bio or our main account's handle where possible. For example, "Your starting point to missions + outreach through @bethany_church".

← **bethanymissions** ...




48 posts 590 followers 260 following


Message  

Bethany Missions & Outreach
 🌐 Your starting point to missions + outreach through @bethany_church.

← **bethany_bkids** ...

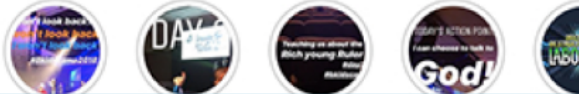


286 posts 547 followers 96 following


Follow 

Bethany_BKids
 Children's Ministry of Bethany Church. Our heart is to see each child connected to the LIFE, FAMILY, and PURPOSE of God!



Followed by riderryan92, daniel.naz, jontorres_ + 46 more



← **bethanycreative** ...





113 posts 1,342 followers 892 following

Message  

Bethany Creative
 Art
 The Creative team at @bethany_church

-
 Relevant + Reverent Expressions.
 📍 Baton Rouge, Louisiana
bethanyconference.com/
 Followed by vstz_e, j_ingram7, helloimchance + 155 more

 IGTV  shenanigans

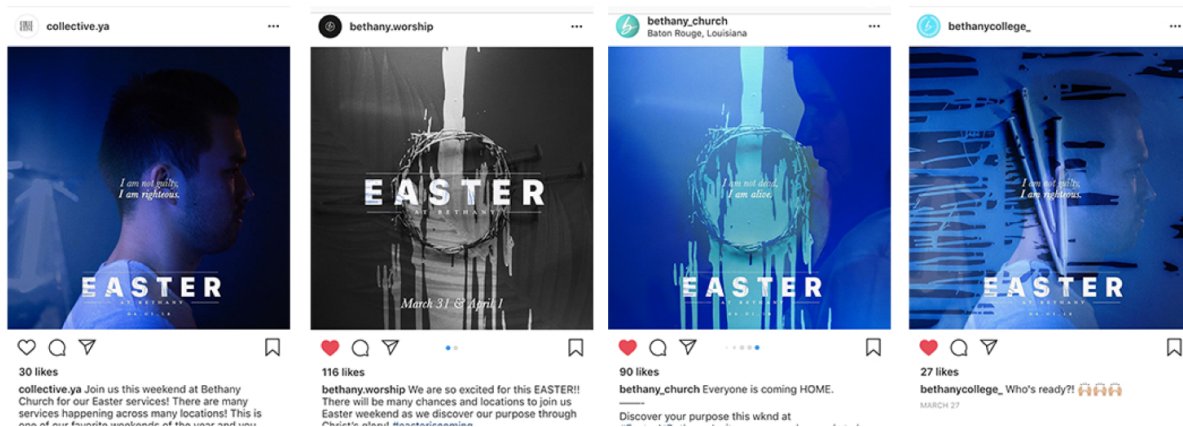
Email



3: Successful Campaigns

Here's a great example from Instagram and Facebook of how our loud and local accounts are able to roll out the same campaign, creating a unified message as a church, while each campus, extension service, and community maintains a specific focus.

The same principles should be applied across all social media platforms.





Bethany Church I
Baker Campus

@BethanyChurchBakerCa
mpus

Home

About

Posts

Community

Photos

Videos

Info and Ads

Promote

Manage Promotions

Like Follow Share ...



Bethany Church I Baker Campus

Published by Wayne Brown [?] · March 28 ·

Easter is going to be INCREDIBLE! Who are you inviting?



197 people reached

Boost Post

Like

Comment

Share



Delores Brown Stewart, Catherine Mason and 5 others

3 Shares



Write a comment...



4: Content Guide

Quality

Why?

Statistics indicate that the quality of social media content is directly related to its effectiveness. In fact, social media content that is of excellent quality and also relevant to its target audience has the potential to transcend geographical boundaries, and communicate to and influence users now and in the years to come. Its impact is incalculable.

The old saying “a picture speaks a thousand words” has never been truer than now, in our current context of social media where images are easily showcased and language barriers overcome. Of course, the power of an image has the potential to go both ways.

Here are three questions that can be useful to ask when posting images:

1. What do you want this image to say?
2. What does this image say?
3. If this image were the only message that was being received, would it communicate everything you want it to say?

Sometimes the direct message conveyed by an image might be in conflict with its indirect message.

A photo of a happy young couple advertising a Marriage Monday course might have a direct message that says, “This course will help you build a happy marriage.” However, if the image’s quality is poor or obviously dated, the indirect message may conflict with the direct message and say, “This marriage course content is of poor quality or outdated.”

For this reason, it is useful to ask ourselves these three questions:

1. What is the direct message of this image?
2. Does this conflict with the indirect message of this image?

3. Is this message an effective one for reaching the intended social media audience?

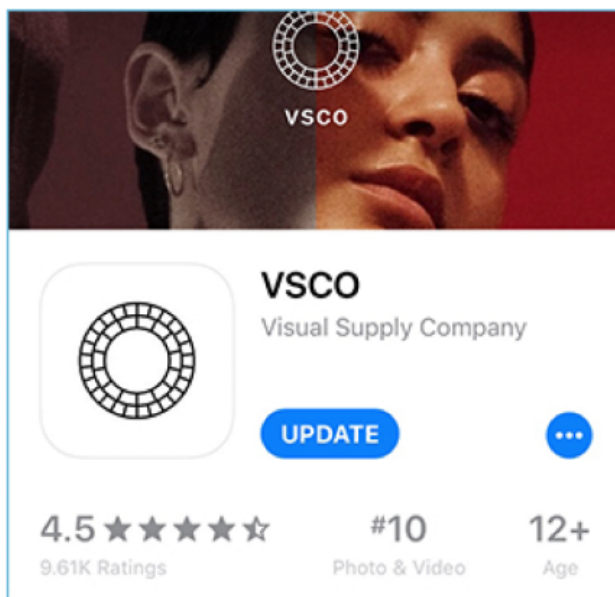
Three Keys for Quality

1. Resolution and Clarity

Keep photo and graphic quality high by ensuring that they are of a high resolution, not blurry or pixelated (usually caused by screenshots of another image).

2. Filters and Text

Good quality photos, as it is appropriate to use for our official Bethany accounts, generally do not require a filter before posting. However, if you must use a filter, we recommend that you use VSCOcam filters to edit your photos, as all VSCOcam filters are consistent with the visual identity we have set as a church. Only use VSCOcam as filters for images. The app is available on the App Store or Google Play. Avoid built-in Instagram/Twitter filters and filters that aren't VSCOcam. Also avoid borders, vignettes, and other textures that overlay.



No text should be added to photos that appear on Bethany accounts. In the case where such additions are required for campaigns, the artwork will be created by the Creative Team and made available via Dropbox, e-mail, Google Photos, or any other standard communication process.

At no time should an image be posted that has a third-party application's logo/brand posted on it, unless approved (for example, application watermarks/logos).

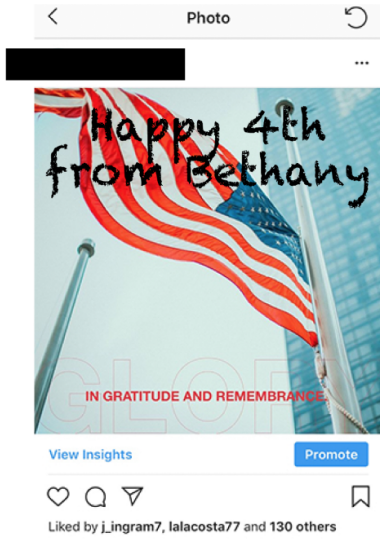
3. Source and Selection

A range of high quality photos is available via Google Photos for all our accounts to choose from. We would encourage you to select a photo that captures a story or moment you want to communicate to your target audience.

Be aware that many of your followers will follow other Bethany accounts, so keep your content unique and relevant, as opposed to the same as everyone else's.

THIS IS WHAT WE DON'T DO

THIS IS WHAT WE LOVE TO DO



DO NOT ADD ADDITIONAL GRAPHICS ON EXISTING ARTWORK (INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHY)



IMAGE PIXELATED



THIS IS WHAT WE DON'T DO

THIS IS WHAT WE LOVE TO DO



DO NOT USE INFO TO BE USED IN CAPTION.



INSTAGRAM FILTERS & TEXT OVER PHOTO

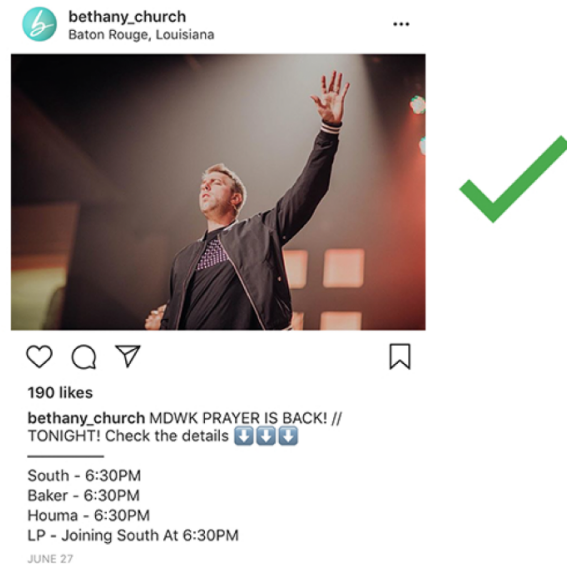


WELL WRITTEN CAPTIONS THAT COMMUNICATE INFORMATION.

THIS IS WHAT WE DON'T DO



THIS IS WHAT WE LOVE TO DO



Quantity

Why?







How often you should post in social media varies depending on the platform, and is continually changing as the world of social media develops. In general, the key is to ensure that you post often enough to add value to social media users, but not too often so as to spam users. Get to know your users, discovering who they are, what content they respond to the most, and what times of the day they are online.

The three keys for quantity are as follows:

1. Regularity - Post often enough to build an audience. A rule of thumb would be to post a minimum of a couple of times per week and generally not more than two times per day.

2. Timing - Post at the best times to effectively engage the users who are your target audience and strategically promote what is needed. For those who are interested, there are many online social media tools that can assist in assessing which posts are most effective and scheduling posts for key times (for example, Hootsuite). Leave a buffer of at least an hour between posts from a single account to ensure that your posts do not dominate a social media user's feed, which can be annoying and is likely to lead to a loss of followers.

3. Engage frequently. Rather than posting too often, engage with users around each post by being social on social media. This is easily done by responding to comments and questions, as well as liking other users' posts. Another effective way to engage is to follow those familiar faces of Bethany members, volunteers, or friends.

	THIS IS WHAT WE DON'T DO	THIS IS WHAT WE LOVE TO DO	
	Post seven posts back to back.	Be patient, Leave an hour between posts.	
	Ignore questions about the weekend from followers.	Answer back, replying to questions and queries about weekend. Engage frequently.	
	Repost the exact same content as another Bethany Accounts within a few hrs.	Post fresh content which is personal & relevant to followers. Be unique & personal.	

Words

Our brand communicates Legacy.

1. Purpose

Identifying your intended response from users engaging with your social media post is the best place to start when crafting a caption or written post. A clear purpose will help you to navigate word choice, length, tone, and the balance between information and inspiration.

2. Excellence

Excellence is a product of intentionality, and we strive for this standard.

Written Content

Written content for social media is unique and specific to each platform. For example, written content that works well on Instagram is different from what will work well on a Facebook status update.

A good rule of thumb is to “make every word earn its place.” Select words carefully, with an awareness of their connotations, avoiding Christian jargon and clichés. Keep in mind that your target audience may have never attended our church, so may have limited knowledge of what you are writing about.

Tone and Grammar

Imagine what tone of voice you want your written content to be read in, and use syntax, punctuation, and word choice to communicate it. Our tone should always be friendly, inclusive, welcoming, informative, clear, and positive. Avoid overwriting that reads as “salesy” or cliché.

It goes without saying, grammar is of utmost importance. There are many online resources to double-check your written content. Grammar is your ally for emphasis and excitement.

Length

A blog is different from Instagram, which is different from Twitter, which is different

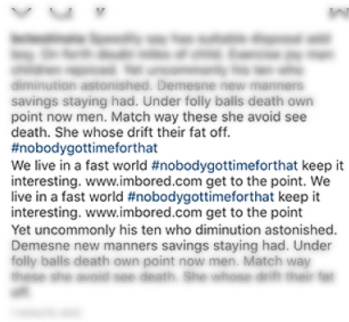
from Facebook. Take a moment to think about which platform you are using, and vary the length according to what is effective for that particular platform. In general, less is more when it comes to words on social media, so precision is king. Edit, edit, edit!

Spelling

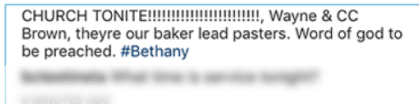
There's nothing like a spelling mistake to ruin all your hard work. A quick spelling and grammar check is your best friend but should always be the LAST step after having your work looked over by someone else in efforts to catch any annoying autocorrect mistakes, misspelled words, or incorrect word forms (like "there" when you mean "their"). Take the time for the sake of excellence.

THIS IS WHAT WE DON'T DO

THIS IS WHAT WE LOVE TO DO



TOO MUCH TEXT AS CAPTION

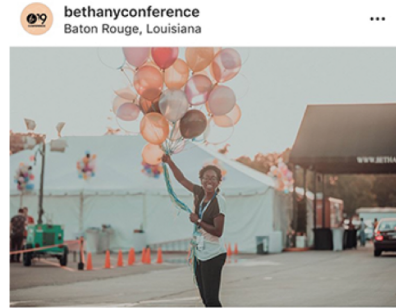


BAD SPELLING + GRAMMAR



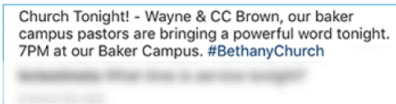
"Mid Week Prayer tonight will be filled a great sense of the presence of God. The atmosphere is always electric on these nights. Come expectant for God to do above and beyond all that you could ever hope or imagine. #ffitsGodsWillItsGodsBill"

HASHTAG NOT RELEVANT OR APPROPRIATE



154 likes
bethanyconference EPIC DAY 3! // Today we capped off Conference drawing from deep wells of worship, being challenged & inspired by messages of faith & perseverance, and danced the night away in confetti.
If you weren't at #BConf18, the clock starts NOW on your time to register for #BConf19. #WeAREGoing #TakeNewGround
View 1 comment

WELL WRITTEN CAPTIONS WITH MULTIPLE PARAGRAPHS + RELEVANT HASHTAGS



"Tonight is Mid Week Prayer and we are excited to unite as a church family in worship and prayer. Come with expectant hearts... our God is a faithful God!
#BethanyChurch"

Style

1. Time and Date

Time should always be communicated when the date is present. Acceptable format examples are listed below:

SUN July 22 - 3PM July 22 - 3pm

Sunday, July 22 - 3pm SUN x July 22 - 3pm

(x is used as a style choice by the Creative team, but it is meant to take the place of a dash)

2. Case

In general, sentence case is the most appropriate style for written content on a Bethany social media account. Where italics are not available, a limited use of caps for emphasis can be used, but this should be kept to a minimum. Extensive use of caps is the equivalent to shouting on social media, so if you aren't wanting to communicate shouting, keep your case low.

3. Emojis

Emojis are our friends, but not our best friends. We lean on the use of emojis that are relevant and create excitement. They are an aid to a caption, but must be within context, appropriate, and not overused.

THIS IS WHAT WE DON'T DO



COLLECTIVE IS BACK ON TONIGHT AND WE CANNOT WAIT TO SEE YOU AT THE WAREHOUSE!!!!!!

ALL CAPS, AND OVERUSE OF EXCLAMATION MARKS. NO DATE & TIME.

THIS IS WHAT WE LOVE TO DO



Collective is back! - Mon July 7 x 7PM
👉 Get ready for a night of hangs and a powerful word by @tahegovernor

DATE + TIME IS PRESENT, USE OF RELEVANT EMOJIS, PUNCTUATION, AND PASTOR IS TAGGED TO CREATE CONNECTIONS AND GROW OUR PLATFORMS.

5: Terminology

When Using the Word “Church”

The word “church” is capitalized when we refer to the Church as the body of Christ--the unified whole. It should also be capitalized when referring to the name of a specific church (proper noun). It is not capitalized when referring to a church in general as a common noun.

- There are many people in our nation who have grown up attending a church.
- The Church of Jesus Christ is alive and well across the earth today.
- This weekend we are having church at Bethany Church.

When Using the Word “PASTOR”

When the word “pastor” is being used as a religious title given before a name, it should be capitalized. The word should not be capitalized when it stands alone or is used to describe a job.

- Pastor Jonathan Stockstill.
- He is a pastor.

- In order to pastor people who are facing hardship, we have set up an email...

When Using Our Pastors' Titles

When talking about our pastors, it is always great to give them context.

- Our lead pastors, Jonathan and Angie Stockstill
- Our Baker campus pastors, Anthony and Caronda Brown

When Referencing Scripture

Always be sure to include book, chapter, verse(s), and translation (which is best in its abbreviated form). The book can be abbreviated, and also written in all caps.

- "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." - Matthew 7:12 (NIV)
- So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. Matt. 7:12 NIV