

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Best practices for your channels COVID-19 Crisis



This document is designed to serve as a resource for the Minnesota tourism industry during the COVID-19 crisis. While these are difficult times, our industry is resilient and strong. We can work together to mindfully market Minnesota as premier destination when residents and visitors are ready to travel.

As the COVID-19 situation evolves, we will offer best practice tips and content guidance on our industry [COVID-19 website hub](#). We encourage partners to share updates with the Explore Minnesota team about ongoing developments.

Be Sensitive & Be Smart

Social media is one of the best ways to promote your community and its businesses. During a crisis it is especially important to pivot your social strategy in order to maintain brand credibility and respect from your fans and followers. Each social platform is unique. Your audience and the purpose of the social channels may differ. Keep this in mind as you decide how to utilize each platform.

Follow the lead of Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, the Minnesota Department of Health, U.S. Travel Association and other officials on awareness and information dissemination about the situation.

General Tips

- Review scheduled or paid content before it is set live. It may be wise to pause certain messaging.
- Run your social media content through multiple sensitivity filters. Show another colleague your image, copy, etc. to gauge their reaction.
- Measure the sentiment on your posts. How are users reacting to your content? Are they liking, commenting, sharing? If not, slow messaging to avoid adding clutter to an ever-changing situation.
- Now is not a time to self-serve; avoid strong action calls to your destination, attractions or business.
- Look to Explore Minnesota for guidance during and after this crisis. Remember, we're stronger together. We want to show travelers that Minnesota is open when they are ready to travel.
- Use this time to plan for future marketing efforts and have your social strategy ready when people are ready to travel.

What Should I Post?

- Consider your locals and what is valuable to them.
 - *For example: news about restaurants offering delivery, takeout or curbside pickup; retailers that offer online shopping and special incentives.*
- Avoid promoting activities, attractions or events that are cancelled, closed or prohibited.
- Highlight individuals in your community that are doing good things during the crisis.
- Highlight attractions or businesses that are doing Facebook Lives or sharing relevant content.
- Be sensitive to the situation at hand and respect the fears, worries and concerns of your residents, visitors, partners and local businesses.
 - *For example: add mindful disclaimers about supporting businesses via delivery, takeout or curbside pickup, gift cards; to safely explore our state's wide-open spaces, to be cautious of closures and health/safety operation measures along the way, including park and/or visitor closures, etc.*
- Leave time each day to moderate comments or questions. If you cannot provide an answer, direct them to an outlet that can.

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Facebook

- “Pin” important or a timely post to the top of your feed.
- Use geo-targeting if messaging is only relevant to locals, not visitors.
- You do not need to create content on your own. Curate reputable outlet or partner content if needed.
- Pause scheduled content and review your paid strategy during this unprecedented time.

What is Explore Minnesota doing? Explore Minnesota has decided to pause all paid digital marketing efforts at this time. Our organic strategy for sharing tourism related content is fluid as the crisis continues. We will share inspiring photos or videos as we see fit.

Twitter

- “Pin” important or a timely post to the top of your feed.
- Use retweets from your partners and community to spread the word about fact-based information (i.e. closures, postponements, etc.).
- Twitter is commonly used as a news outlet so be smart in what you decide to RT.
- Keep news updates timely, short and direct.

What is Explore Minnesota doing? Explore Minnesota is sharing pertinent info from state agencies, or tourism partners. Our strategy for sharing tourism related content is fluid as the crisis continues. We will share inspiring photos or videos as we see fit.

Instagram

- Instagram stories and static posts are very different. Use stories to share relevant links (if you can swipe up) or timely info. The posts will disappear in 24 hours unless you add them to your highlights.
- Only use the static feed to share content you want on your channel permanently.
- Leave time each day to moderate comments or questions. If you cannot provide an answer, direct them to an outlet that can.
- Instagram will be your best channel to utilize as users will be looking for an escape and is designed to share imagery. Instagram users tend to like succinct copy and are not as likely to click on links that would take them out of the app.

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Pinterest

- You may continue to choose to post blog content as Pinterest is not viewed as a timely news source.
- Utilize this channel for users that are still dreaming of their road trip or summer vacation.
- It’s also ok to pause Pinterest. Prioritize your social strategy where it’s most needed.

What is Explore Minnesota doing? Explore Minnesota will continue to post organic content as we see fit.

If you have additional questions or concerns: Caitlin Hannah, caitlin.hannah@state.mn.us, 651-757-1874