

# THE 10 COMMANDMENTS *of* CONTENT CREATION

**THE SMALL BUSINESS GUIDE TO FOOLPROOFING  
YOUR CONTENT STRATEGY ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

# INTRODUCTION

## Creating

engaging content is arguably one of the hardest parts of being on social media. That being said, many small business owners run into the roadblock of not knowing what to post or how to post it.

That's where we come in. Here at Likeable Local, we create content for hundreds of different businesses across a wide range of industries and professions. In doing so, we've developed a content strategy that follows a specific set of rules, or what we refer to as the "10 Commandments of Content Creation." And we want to share our wisdom with you.

A lot of business owners simply don't know where to start when it comes to posting content to social. They often second guess themselves or feel like what they have to say is not important to their followers. Our answer to that is this: Your opinion

is important! Always remember that your followers *chose* to "like" you on Facebook or "follow" you on Twitter. They did that because they are interested in hearing your business' point of view and what you have to say.

That being said, the beauty of social media is that you have free reign to discuss topics that interest you. It's important to be mindful, though, that the overall goal of posting content on your business' social media pages is to encourage traction and engagement. Always put yourself in your customer's shoes -- Would I stop and read this post if I saw it in my News Feed? If the answer is Yes, then move forward.

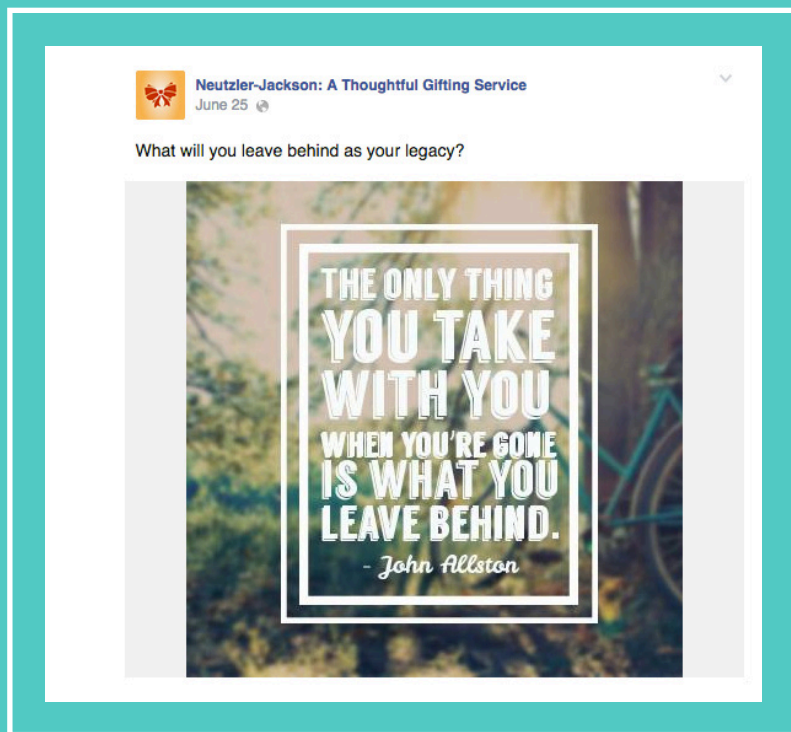
For those of you who have a social media presence in place, but are stuck on the content front, these 10 rules will help you confidently post great material that is bound to engage your audience. Read on!

# 1.

## GIVE YOUR FOLLOWERS A REASON TO ENGAGE.

The Content Team at Likeable always strives to make content either *educational* or *entertaining*. Think about it – Why do people go on to Facebook in the middle of the day? They do it to escape from their work and be entertained. They do it to gather news and learn something new. This is important to keep in mind when creating a piece of content.

If your content is engaging, it will show. People will like, comment, and share your content on their own pages. Engaging content sparks an emotion in the viewer, making them laugh or teaching them something they didn't already know.



Take a look at this first example. Not only does the business offer the audience inspiration through highlighting a quote in the image, but they also ask a question in the text, prompting their followers to answer and engage with the post.

Now take a look at the next example. This dental practice is directly asking it's Facebook following to engage and comment with what they think about their office. A post like this is great because it is directly prompting the user, with no mention of how great they think their business is. Remember: Engagement is not about self-promotion.



A social media page with engaged content not only increases credibility for the business, but keeps your followers coming back for more.

## 2. THINK POSITIVE.

When creating engaging, shareable content, it's important to gravitate towards language that sounds more positive and inviting. Think Disney World positivity here. For instance, there is a big difference between "These 10 exercises could help improve your immune system!" and "AVOID these foods that will give you bad breath!" See what we mean?

Psychologists often note that the use of positive language sparks longer conversations than negative language. The same applies for social media -- Your audience will be more likely to interact with (and even read) posts that evoke positive vibes. Check out some examples below.

 **Toast Cafe of Cary**  
October 24

What is your favorite flavor? Check out the 50 States of Ice Cream!  
<http://bit.ly/1qOfSB>



**Dave Kerpen**

Posted by Likeable Business (?) · October 28

Do you consider yourself a self-starter? Here are some tips for unleashing your inner passion: <http://onforb.es/1CBspid>



# 3.

## REMEMBER TO K-I-S-S (KEEP IT SIMPLE, STUPID).

This one is easy – Long posts on social media don't tend to get a lot of engagement. In fact, Facebook posts with just 40 characters see a whopping 86% more engagement than longer posts. Here are a list of some ideal lengths for each type of social media post:

**Facebook Post: 40 characters**

**Tweet: 71-100 characters**

**LinkedIn Post: 20-25 words**

**Google+ Post: 60 characters**

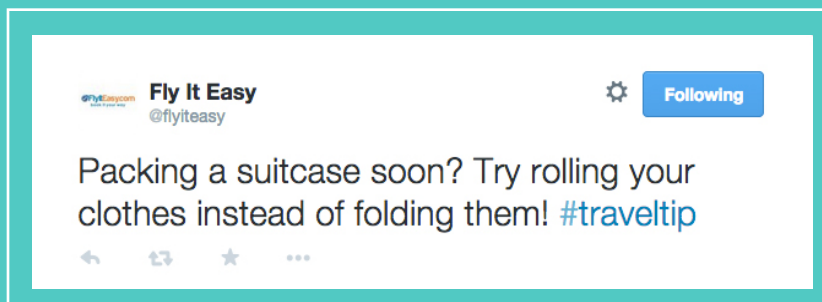
**YouTube Video: 3 minutes**

**Blog Post: 1,600 words**

Take a look at the Facebook post below. It doesn't look like much, but that post is just around 40 characters!



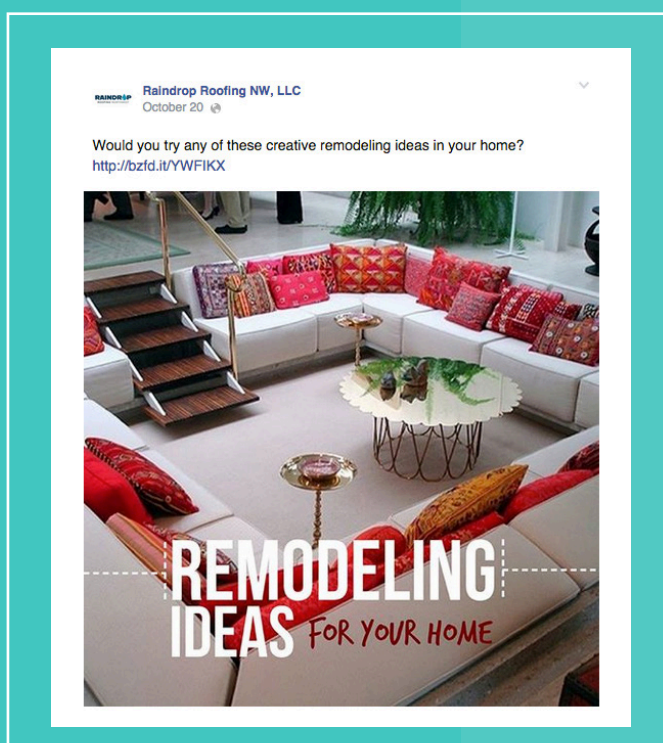
Same thing goes for this tweet, which sits at 85 characters:



# 4.

# HAVE A CONVERSATION.

It's important to keep content *real*. In other words, don't think headlines, think conversation. The easiest way to do this is to simply ask the audience a question. It's a difference between, "Sony Gives Lens-Style Cameras Another Go" and "Will you use the new lens-style camera produced by Sony?"



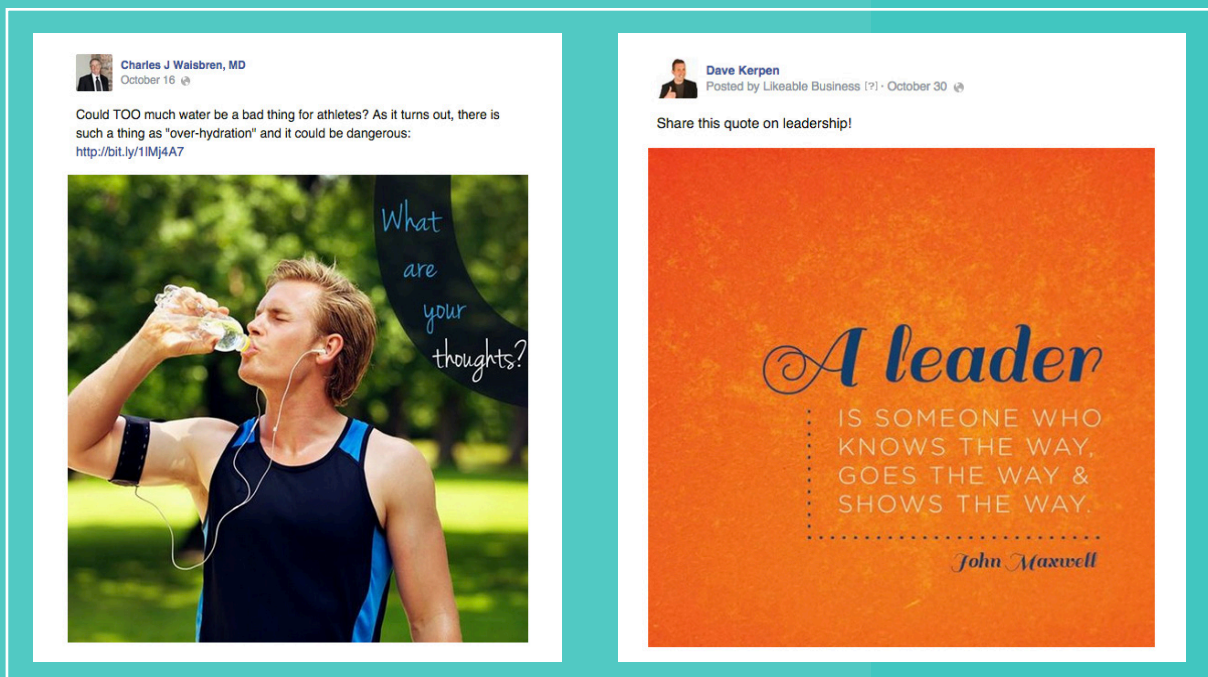
Of course, the biggest caveat when it comes to social media is the lack of face-to-face interaction. While it's true that a social media post can never replace real-life interaction with your customer, you still have the power to "get on their level" on social. Real conversations will add exponential value to your social media streams.

# 5.

## ASK YOURSELF: IS IT SHAREABLE?

Would you share the post if you came across it in your News Feed? With the stiff competition out there on sites like Facebook and Twitter, shareable content stays one step ahead. Remember, each post you create should add some sort of value to the conversation – either by informing, entertaining, or promoting your brand – and not just contribute to the “noise.”

Creating shareable content starts with truly knowing your audience. What do they like to read about? What interests them? Remember, this may not always be exactly in line with your own interests.



Once you have a handle on exactly who your audience is, try to strike a chord with them. Content that stands out to them will be more likely to be engaged with and shared. Remember: The content that you work hard to produce for your social media pages will always be competing with someone else’s newborn baby. The competition is steep!

# 6.

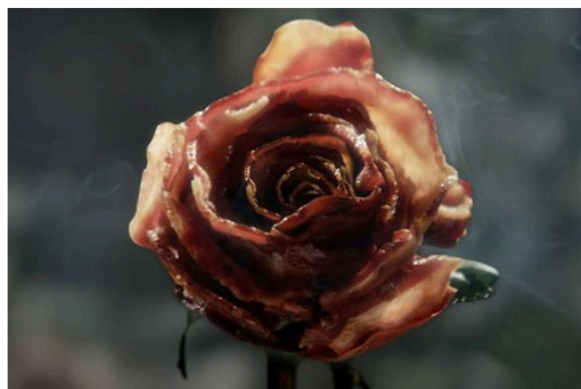
## KNOW HOW TO PROPERLY CURATE.

Content *curation*, unlike *creation*, involves sharing or gathering content from third-party sources, like news sites or other businesses in your area. While this content may not be 100% unique to your business, there are still many benefits to curating content and it can be a powerful marketing tool for your business. Properly curating content to your business page can position you as a Thought Leader, making your business a “destination for information.”

One important aspect of content curation is making sure you add your “two cents” to whatever it is you are sharing. This will put a unique spin on a post, making it more your own. For instance, ask the audience, “What do you think of these creative Bloody Mary recipes? We love #3!” and then link to the article. This shares information from another source, while still adding a personal touch.

HMG HMG Plus, Inc.  
October 24

SHARE this bacon rose with the love of your life! <http://bit.ly/1gtlzh>



Bronstein Properties, LLC  
June 30

What home repairs are you making this season? <http://onforb.es/1fbthMb>



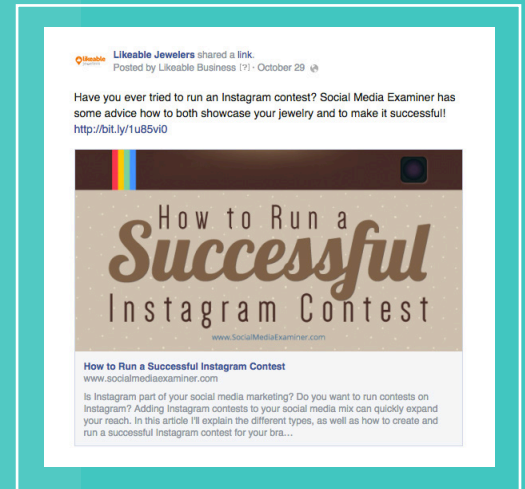
In short, curating content from time to time is a fantastic way to deal with the “content crunch” that many businesses find themselves in. This can not only scale your social media efforts, but can also establish your business page as a “hub” for information.

# 7.

## BE MINDFUL OF THE 4-1-1 RULE.

This brings us to our next commandment – The 4-1-1 rule. The rule states that for every six social media posts you create, four should be curated from third party sites, one should be a personal piece of content that you’ve created yourself (and is unique to your business), and one should be a high-value piece of content used to generate leads (and can be more self-promoting).

This is a great rule of thumb to keep you on track with appropriate ratios for content you publish to your pages. No one wants to visit a Facebook page that only pushes product or services on the consumer, so keeping one promotional post for every six will keep your followers engaged.



Likeable Local shared a link.  
Posted by Likeable Business (?) · November 4 · 🌐

"Our goal is to have Likeable businesses on every Main Street in every town," Kerpen says. "While New York is a great city to be based in, it's important to have an office in a real town and Portland is as indicative a town as any where real small businesses are fighting the hard fight each and every day." Here's an inside look at our stellar Portland office! <http://bit.ly/portlandlikeable>



**New York tech company betting on Portland - Portland Press Herald Contributors**  
contributors.pressherald.com

The Likeable Local team on Congress Street in Portland. From the left: CTO Hugh Morgenbesser, Kurt Schwanda, CEO Dave Kerpen, Daryl Lamoureux, and Ben Was

Same goes for curated content – Studies show that social media posts linking to third party sites generate 33% more clicks than posts linking to your own website. Remember: You want your business' social media pages to be a destination for information. Don't turn off your viewers by posting too much about yourself or your products.

# 8.

## KEEP IT TIMELY.

When producing content, it's crucial to keep topics fresh and current. The last thing you want to do is share an article on your business page from 2008 and have one of your followers comment on how old it is. Avoid falling into this trap by staying on top of news happening in your town. If you are a local business, chances are your followers would love to hear your thoughts on a recent event that happened in your city.

This goes for holidays as well – Holidays are a great time to draft a quick and easy post wishing everyone a great day. Check out some of these eye-catching holiday posts.



Have a spooky and safe Halloween, everyone!



Likeable Local

Posted by Likeable Business (?) · July 4

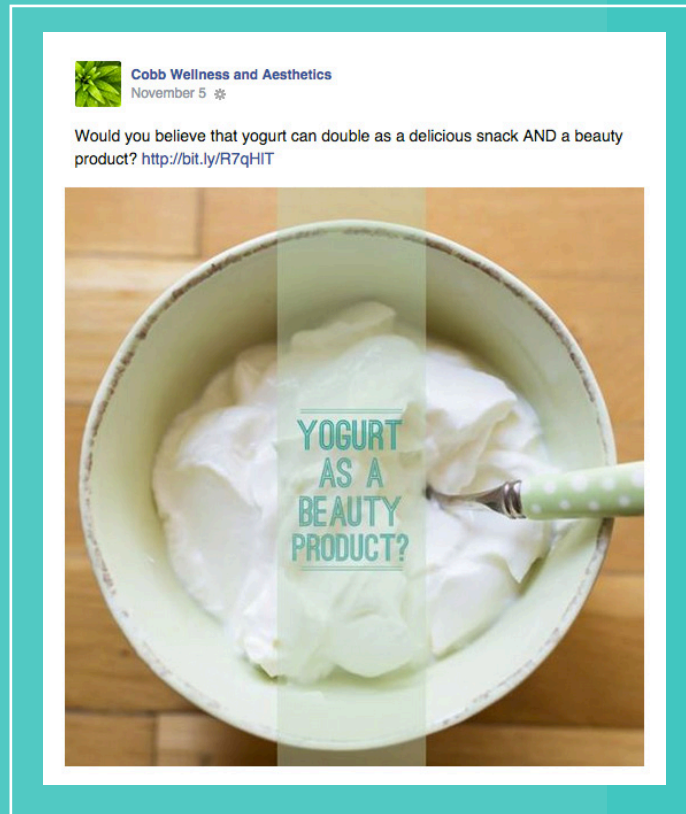
Happy Fourth of July, everyone! Have a safe and #likeable holiday!



# 9.

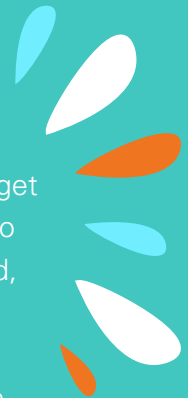
## USE VISUALS TO ENHANCE YOUR MESSAGE.

Historically speaking, the most successful social media posts are ones that include photos or video. In fact, multimedia posts on Facebook increase engagement by *at least* 40%.



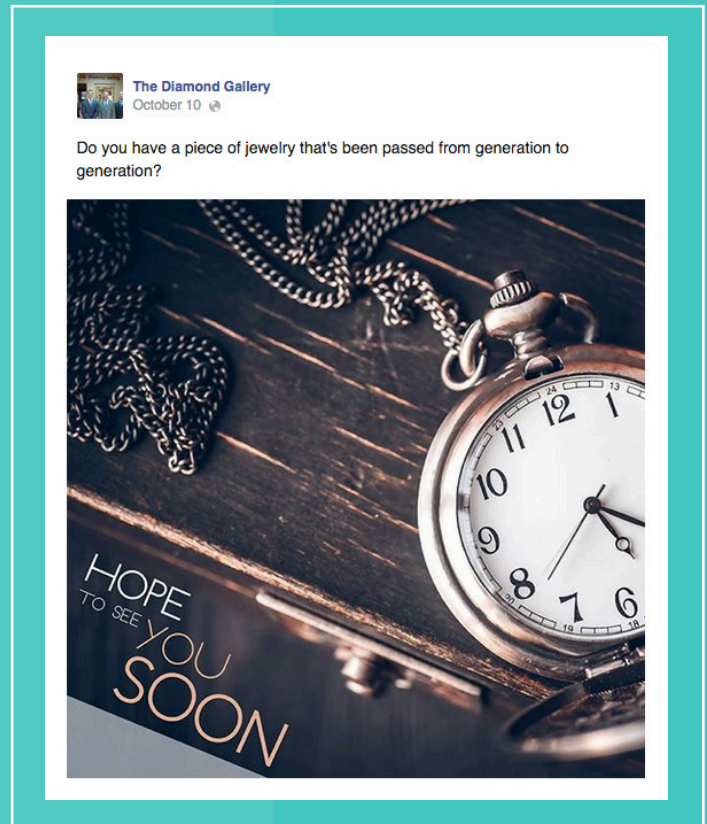
First, let's talk about photos. Posting photos on Facebook is the best way to get more attention from your fans because images are easier for your audience to consume than text. They also tend to "pop" in the News Feed or Twitter Feed, making your content stand out from the rest. However, be aware that not all photos are created equal. Not only must you share high-quality images, you must also share images that interest your target audience. Always think from their perspective when it comes to creating content. Here are some tips from Likeable's Graphic Design team:

1. Don't alter your image too drastically. Any time you persistently edit an effect or filter, the image can lose its character. Keep it simple, but do play with brightness and contrast if needed. Applying interesting filters can make your image more visually appealing!



2. Be careful when you crop. You don't want to crop your image and exclude an important element. Try to avoid cropping out type, significant objects, or people in a photo.

3. Applying type can be tricky. Remember to keep things simple and readable. Your type should relate to the image and the topic of the content. You may need to place type over a shape so that the background doesn't interfere with legibility. Avoid using heavy fonts or ones that are too decorative. Remember: Facebook will not approve images that violate a 20% rule with text. This means that your text must be able to be placed 5x over your image, without overlapping, for it to be approved as a boosted piece of content. If you are not advertising the post, no need to worry about this rule.



4. Design elements can add a sense of flair to a piece. Don't be afraid to add icons or shapes that relate to your copy. For example, if you are posting an article about healthy eating and decide to use an image of a bowl of fresh fruit, don't be afraid to apply icons or symbols that relate to fruit. Use colors that already exist in the image so everything matches nicely, but make sure the color of the type contrasts its background.

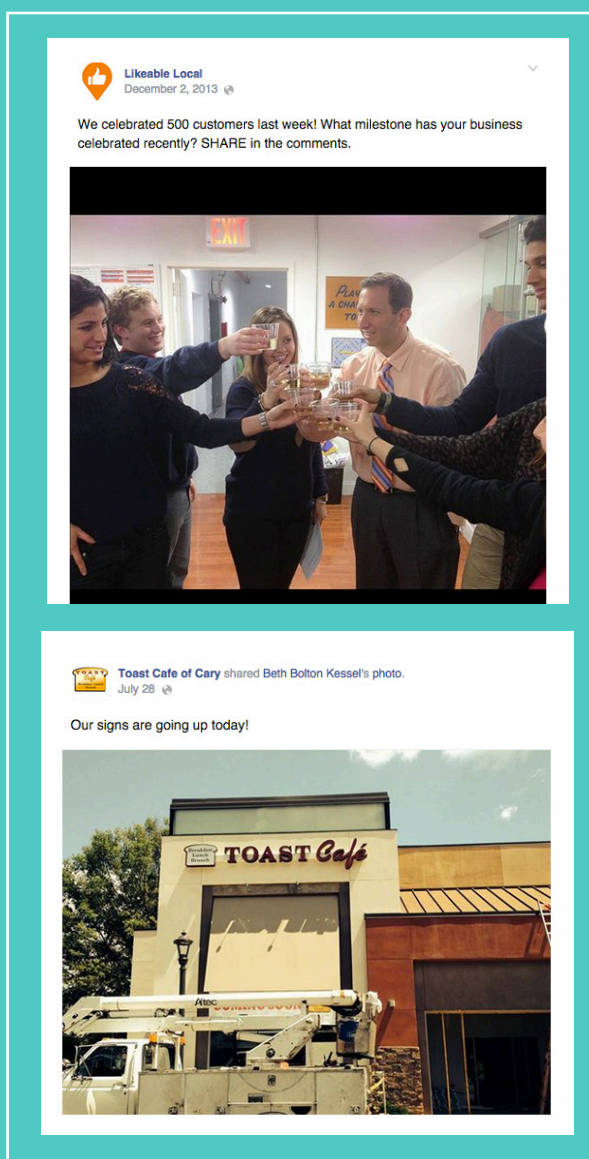
Videos have recently become a huge deal on social. Not only do they get greater visibility on Facebook, they have been associated with higher engagement levels as well. Facebook's latest algorithm actually prefers videos directly uploaded to your business page versus posts that link to video sites like Vimeo or YouTube. Uploading a video to your page every now and then could give your content an edge over your competitors.

# 10. TELL A STORY.

One of the most powerful tools you have as a business owner on social media is the ability to use storytelling in your content. Celebrate your business' 10th anniversary on social! Tell your followers about how your company began. Use the power of nostalgia to create a strong message that will really resonate with your audience.

Besides positioning yourself as an expert in your field, building trust with your audience is one of the most important aspects of having a solid content strategy. A great way to build trust is to share your passion and story with the world.

A lot of small businesses worry about divulging too much information about their story on social media. Use your best judgment – Don't ever share any information that could cause a breach in security or put your business at risk, but share as much as possible to engage your followers and gain trust and respect within your community.



# NEXT STEPS

## *So, now what?*

The truth is, content is sometimes the scariest part of being on social media. It's difficult to ensure that you and your staff will be able to produce fresh, creative ideas on a regular basis. But once you've developed an efficient strategy for producing content, you'll be able to publish it faster and more frequently. Keep these 10 Commandments in mind when creating content and your posts are sure to stand out from the pack.

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[Twitter.com/likeablelocal](https://twitter.com/likeablelocal)

### **Web:**

[likeablelocal.com](http://likeablelocal.com)

## *Want help?*

If after reading this eBook, you're still feeling overwhelmed when it comes to social content, we might be able to help. Our company's software packages actually include industry-specific content for your small business, posted to your pages a few times a week. While we can't do everything for you, we can give you the tools and posts to perfect your strategy and get your business off its feet. Get in touch with us and we'll explain how we can help!