

British Columbia's Regional Tourism Secretariat's

#RoamBCFromHome **Social Media Tool Kit** (Version Three)

Social Media Guidelines for Tourism Industry Stakeholders

Last Updated May 14, 2020

bcrts

British Columbia
Regional Tourism
Secretariat

A Collaboration Between:

CARIBOO CHILCOTIN COAST TOURISM ASSOCIATION

KOOTENAY ROCKIES TOURISM ASSOCIATION

NORTHERN BC TOURISM ASSOCIATION

THOMPSON OKANAGAN TOURISM ASSOCIATION

TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF VANCOUVER ISLAND



Introduction

COVID-19 is a fast-moving situation, and we're all learning how to navigate these changes and how to best support each other through it. We recognize that the current situation is having a major impact on our tourism partners, families, and communities across the province. With that in mind, the Regional Destination Management Organizations of British Columbia (as a group, BC's Regional Tourism Secretariat) have partnered to bring our tourism businesses some guiding help during this time.

While it's not safe to travel now, we can hope to inspire our followers on social media to visit us when the time is right, reinjecting vigour into our tourism industry. In fact, going dark on social media during a time of crises can have a negative impact on your brand.

In an effort to offer resources to our incredible business partners in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region, we have compiled guidelines to help you provide ongoing virtual experiences to your guests, continue sharing what you love, and maintain engagement during this challenging time

While it is essential to stay informed with the local health authorities about what's going on, we can brighten up our social feeds and give our followers what they crave by sharing uplifting stories and dreamy online experiences.

From virtual educational tours to moments in nature and cooking demos to wine tastings, you name it; we will share it. Let's invite our followers on a virtual journey, as an armchair traveller to our local businesses and backyard playground.

General Social Media Guidelines

- There is a great opportunity to provide a reprieve from the heaviness of the current online conversation regarding COVID-19, but that context is still important and relevant. If you have existing campaigns in market or pre-prepared content, make sure to evaluate their value again before posting within the current climate.
- Demonstrate purpose and value but don't sell. Now is a time for businesses, large and small, to contribute to societal needs and act on your values. Overly self-promotional activity will be punished by consumers if not paired with these efforts.
- Your regular social media tone may need to be adjusted to fit the context. Look to project empathy, gratitude and calmness and make sure that the tone of any humour feels appropriate given the situation.
- Visuals are as important as the captions. Attention spans are short on social media and audiences often only look at the image or don't read the entirety of the captions. There may be extra sensitivities around images with groups of people or people out in public, handling of food, or images of outdoor activities that are considered "non-essential", so be extra thoughtful about these choices (even if your copy aligns with all of the appropriate messaging about staying safe).
- Watch how your audience is responding to your content and be willing and able to adapt as needed. Review some of the helpful responses in this document and reach out to our team if you need additional support.

Instilling Customer Confidence

COVID-19 has left a lot of customers feeling uneasy and unsure of what's safe for themselves and their families. While the BC government has begun rolling out its re-starting strategy, it will be some time before everyone begins to feel comfortable, and normal, in social and recreational situations.

While it's time to adapt to welcome back customers, the pandemic is not over. Businesses will need to follow physical distancing measures and enhanced safety protocols for the foreseeable future. To help you demonstrate your commitment to safety during these changing times, this section of the toolkit is designed to give you strategies for your messaging and distribution of safety information.

All businesses should be creating a COVID safe plan in alignment with government guidelines, following WorkSafeBC, Industry Association and PHO guidance.

If you are a business that is able to re-open under the provincial and regional health orders in place, you have an opportunity to build confidence and trust by demonstrating how you're following all government and health authority guidelines and prioritizing customer safety. The key is to be honest and compassionate in your communication. The more thoughtful you are for your customers, the more comfortable they're bound to be.

- Tell them you're open and looking forward to having them, but let them know how business practices have been altered. Communicate how your customers should expect their experience to be: for example, how many people are allowed in the business at a time, which requests are not able to be honoured at this time, etc. Other examples of safety measures to highlight may be installing signage and one-way markers, as well as plexiglass.
- If you have arrangements in place with other partners, such as delivery services or contactless delivery, make sure to share these.
- Be transparent that re-opening is a methodical and staggered process, but your team is staying on top of the latest government policies. Remind them these changes are for their and your staff's health and safety.

- Provide information on 'behind the scenes' items they aren't normally aware of (like cleaning practices or how you've adapted your hours to allow for increased cleaning time) to give them confidence you're doing everything possible to create a safe environment.
- Share how you are valuing your staff and their safety by implementing an employee-first sick leave policy.
- Share how you are adjusting your business to meet the needs of at-risk individuals
- Be true to your brand. Be authentic, compassionate and relevant while driving positive change towards COVID-19 recovery. These brands will be remembered when 'business as usual' returns.
- Use the digital tools and social media channels you have available to set expectations in advance, avoiding any surprises for your customers upon arrival.
- If you have them, update your FAQs on your website with a dedicated COVID-19 section. Keep these up to date as policies and health orders evolve.
- Use your blog or news section to post relevant updates around your opening and safety practices.
- Take advantage of website pop-ups, dedicated sections or notification banners to direct website visitors to these sections.
- Within your Facebook and Twitter accounts, pin posts about COVID-19 policies with a link to the most recent information on your website. On Instagram, your bio information can be temporarily updated, or a dedicated COVID-19 story highlight can be created.
- Take advantage of the hashtags we've created to be a part of our united and amplified approach to tourism recovery in British Columbia. ([#RoamBCFromHome](#) and [#ExploreBCLocal](#)).
- Show leadership by supporting other organizations within the industry and your neighbours - share their efforts in recovery and celebrate their re-openings with your audience.

Content Specific Tips

COVID-19 has left a lot of customers feeling uneasy and unsure of what's safe for While it's great to have a significant focus on the safeguards implemented around COVID-19, as time progresses there may be the opportunity to start balancing this out with more positive content, e.g., posting pictures of guests (in small groups), re-opening activities, positive messaging, etc.

One of the best ways to instill confidence with guests will be to show other guests visiting and core activities resuming.

- Avoid including groups of over six people in content (photos or video).
- Display physical distancing in all imagery that includes people.
- If making videos of food products, show hand washing and other ways of disinfecting.
- If showing disinfectants, make sure to be using a PHO approved cleaner.
- Show staff using proper PPE, behind plexiglass barriers, and cleaning surfaces regularly.
- Share signage in your store by making social media graphics, so customers know what to expect on arrival.
- Share that you're open with your local DMO or chamber of commerce.

As your company gets to a point of re-opening, you may want to consider reaching out to your local media, either via a press release or through social media and make them aware of your plans and refined safety practices. This is a great way of further amplifying your messages and reaching the locals in your community. It's important to note that media outreach should always be assessed at the time carefully, to determine the appropriate approach.

Managing Reviews

More than ever, keeping your online reviews top of mind is key. Guests will be quick to write reviews if they feel like their safety or the safety of the employees is not considered. Encourage your guests to leave reviews, as positive mentions will help drive confidence around your business. However, you should always be prepared to quickly and effectively address negative reviews.

Be clear with your rebooking and cancellation policies. Given the changing nature of the restrictions and restarting plans, it's possible that guests will need to rebook or cancel their plans. Being flexible will help manage your brand reputation and make sure the guests consider returning to your business when they are ready to travel.

#RoamBCFromHome – A Group Approach to Social Media

With every business focused on adjusting to the current crisis, we recognize that time is limited for building a content calendar. To get you started, we have assembled examples and guidelines on 5 themes of content to help you craft posts and join the conversation while using #RoamBCFromHome.

We will also be posting alongside you, amplifying your efforts and sharing your stories, all while encouraging folks to stay home. If you need something this guide does not provide, please let us know.

Please note that the guidance within this tool kit should be adapted to your local context, and each post you write should be reviewed with a lens of sensitivity towards the situation. While we've included some recommendations for each content theme, keep in mind that there are common best practices, such as not picturing large groups or encouraging any behaviour contradictory to the current health orders.

For an amplified approach, and to help us engage and amplify your content always include:

#RoamBCFromHome
#CCCLives
#ExploreBCLater
#StayHome

When writing social media posts on platforms like Twitter, where you are limited by your character count, we recommend putting the emphasis on #StayHome, so we can help reinforce the local health orders. For all platforms, you can choose to weave the hashtags throughout the content, or include them at the end of the post. You name it; we will share it. Let's invite our followers on a virtual journey, as an armchair traveller to our local businesses and backyard playground.

For Your Inspiration

There are countless unique businesses across BC, and to help shine light on many stories, we've grouped together content themes to help you craft posts and join the conversation. They're broad enough to fit in what speaks to you and what's organic to your brand, and some examples are included to help spark your posts.

- Culinary & Agriculture
- Local Love
- Artists & Artisans
- Nature
- Family at Home

THEME ONE

Culinary & Agriculture

Food is a comfort to many cultures around the world; this theme will highlight regional foods, restaurants and chefs, and our local farmers. Whether or not you're in the food & beverage industry, you can share what your tour guides like to cook, or a family recipe. Behind the scenes posts can help highlight the people who make the business happen, and live videos are great for sharing these inside looks.

DOS

- Do show cooking and drink making tutorials (consider Facebook Live or simple smartphone-filmed videos). Here's an example of a [rosé cocktail recipe](#) from Fort Berens Estate Winery.
- Do highlight the season. Do you have a throwback from a farm in your region? Perhaps you partner with a local food provider.
- Do highlight what you have in your backyard.
- Do share gardening tips.
- Do share your local online farmers market.
- Do share behind the scenes looks at your business.

Always practice COVID-19 related tips in content if relevant (e.g. washing hands for 20 seconds, handling groceries/packaging, etc.) If you receive questions around health orders, direct followers to government resources.

DON'TS

- Do not show images that promote behaviour not aligned with local health guidelines (e.g. dinner parties or your staff close together in fields).
- Do not give an estimated time of reopening.
- Avoid sharing COVID-19 related information that is not directly relevant to your business.



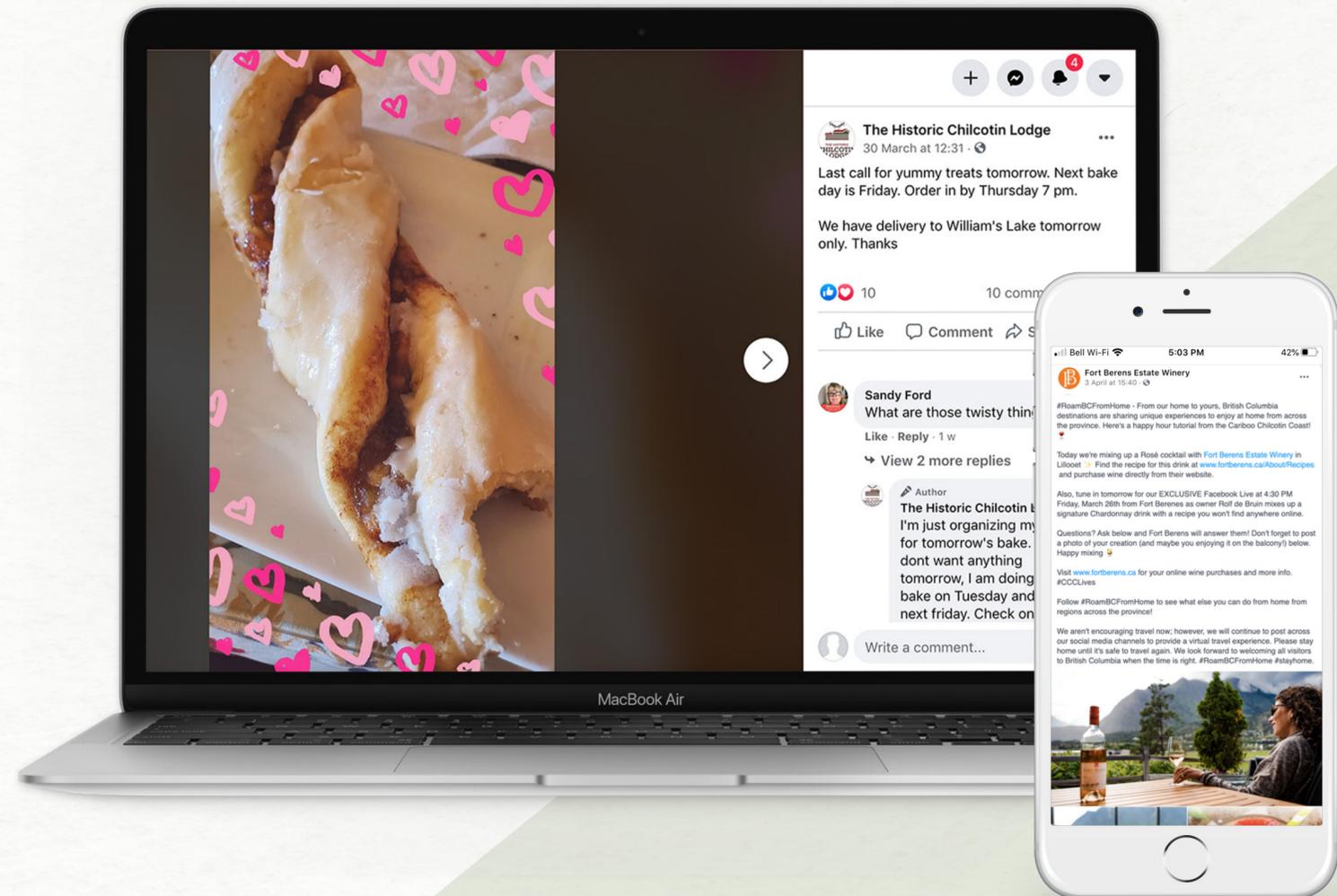
If you need assistance compiling content, reach out to your regional team:

Sydney Redpath-Power, Marketing Director & Executive Secretary
sydney@landwithoutlimits.com

AMPLIFY YOUR POSTS BY USING:
#RoamBCFromHome

TAP INTO YOUR REGIONAL TOURISM HASHTAG:
#CCCLives

SUPPORT THE PROVINCIAL MESSAGING WITH:
#ExploreBCLater



THEME TWO

Local Love

In times of crisis, we share what means most to us: the people and places we love and live. In this theme, encourage engagement in virtual tour experiences, shout-out local businesses that are iconic to their communities, and share other online experiences for armchair travel.

DOS

- Do show what life is like currently at your property or business.
- What is normal to you may be completely abnormal to someone in the city. Think of things like a video/photo of feeding the horses, plowing the driveway with the tractor, or the first signs of spring.
- Do show local love for healthcare staff or other businesses lending a hand in the community (as long as you are doing it from a distance!). Many businesses are sharing their 7pm cheer for healthcare workers from the safety of their home!

Always practice COVID-19 related tips in content if relevant (e.g. washing hands for 20 seconds, handling groceries/packaging, etc.) If you receive questions around health orders, direct followers to government resources.

DON'TS

- Do not encourage people to go outside and explore or visit your business.
- Do not give a false impression as to when visitors can come to your business and explore the region.
- Do not show images that promote behaviour not aligned with local health guidelines (e.g. group gatherings).
- Do not give an estimated time of reopening.
- Avoid sharing COVID-19 related information that is not directly relevant to your business.



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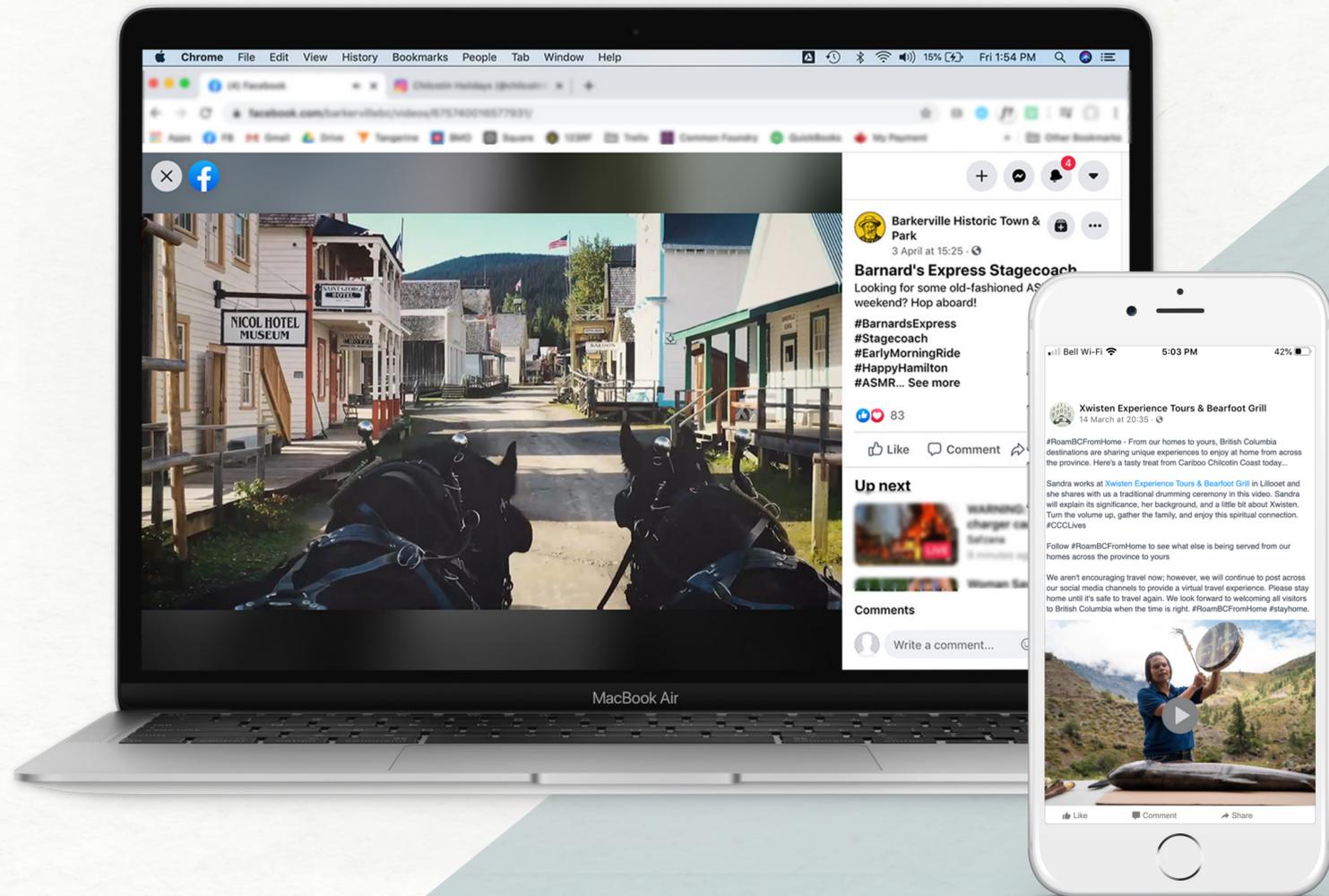
#RoamBCFromHome

TAP INTO YOUR REGIONAL TOURISM HASHTAG:

#CCCLives

SUPPORT THE PROVINCIAL MESSAGING WITH:

#ExploreBCLater



THEME THREE

Artists & Artisans

Trying new things and keeping your mind (and family) busy can help to stimulate positive mental health. This theme will explore how residents are using this time to learn a new language, craft or skill.

DOS

- Do share a video or instructions for something that distracts the mind, brings peace and a zen-like moment to the day.
- Do use culture and language to educate and engage.
- Do share what might be normal to you, your past, and your way of life; it might be a completely unique and transformational experience for someone in an urban environment.

Always practice COVID-19 related tips in content if relevant (e.g. washing hands for 20 seconds, handling groceries/packaging, etc.) If you receive questions around health orders, direct followers to government resources.

DON'TS

- Do not share content that is owned or would be in violation of copyright laws.
- Do not share anything that could be deemed as insensitive or offensive.
- Do not show images that promote behavior not aligned with local health guidelines, e.g., groups of people working out or meditating together.
- Do not offer medical advice or suggest you are a mental health professional if you aren't.
- Do not give a false impression as to when visitors can come to your business and explore the region.
- Do not show images that promote behaviour not aligned with local health guidelines (e.g. group gatherings).
- Avoid sharing COVID-19 related information that is not directly relevant to your business.



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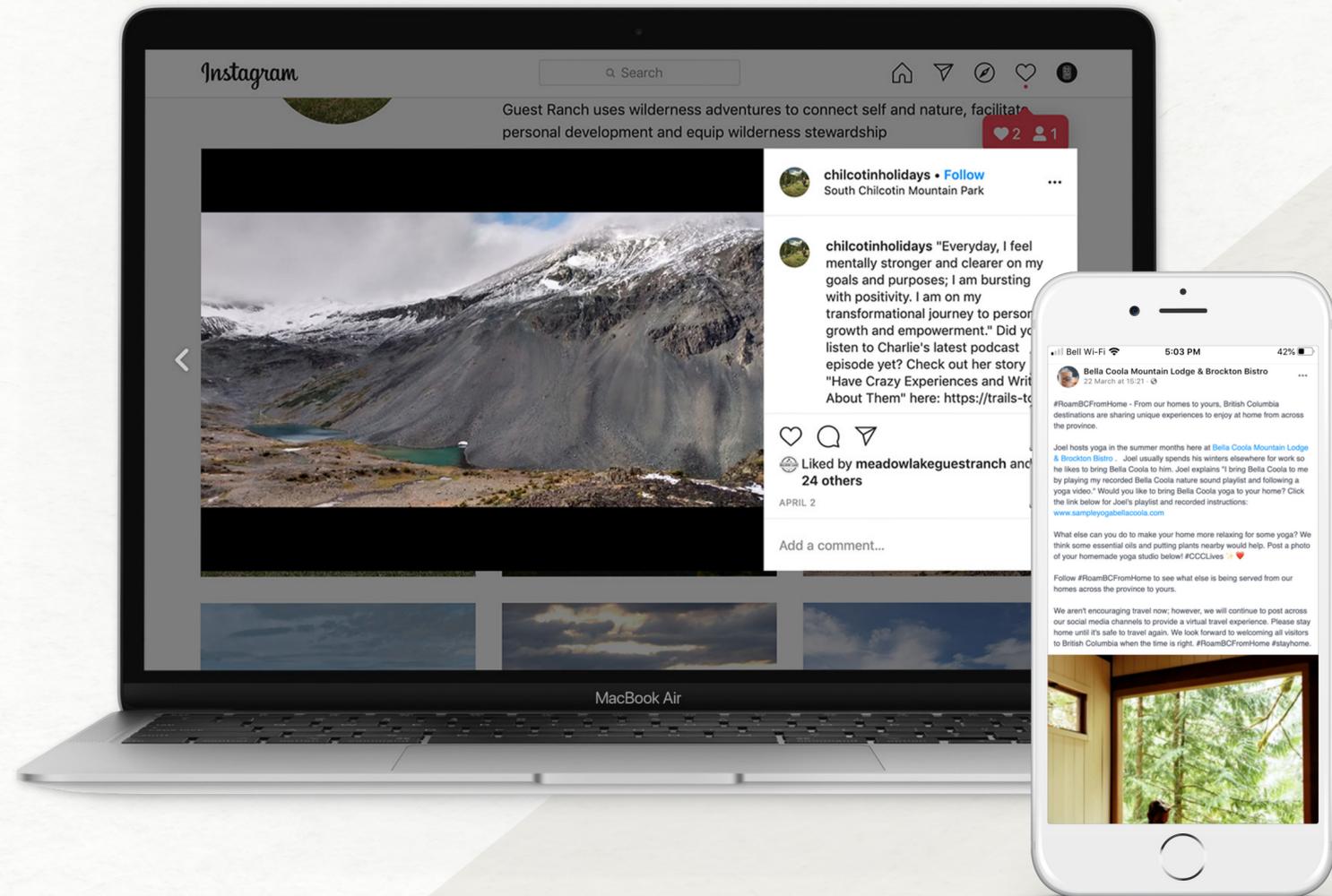
#RoamBCFromHome

TAP INTO YOUR REGIONAL TOURISM HASHTAG:

#CCCLives

SUPPORT THE PROVINCIAL MESSAGING WITH:

#ExploreBCLater



THEME FOUR

Nature

From vast desert landscapes to soaring canopies of old growth, British Columbia's epic nature is recognized across the world. This theme highlights our backyards and their most awe-inspiring visuals. Whether or not your business is based outdoors, you'll have something to highlight here.

DOS

- Do capture what is in your backyard.
- Do share wildlife photos from past outings.
- Do highlight seasonal events.
- Do be sure to emphasize the #StayHome messaging in any nature shots, particularly in rural areas. **This is particularly important for rural communities who are concerned tourists may bring COVID to areas not well equipped to deal with it.**
- Do include in your caption that nature photos were taken prior to the pandemic, particularly those in popular, busy areas or any closed park. **Please note that all BC Parks and National Parks are currently closed; including public visitor services and facilities..**

Always practice COVID-19 related tips in content if relevant (e.g. washing hands for 20 seconds, handling groceries/packaging, etc.) If you receive questions around health orders, direct followers to government resources.

DON'TS

- Do not show images that promote behavior not aligned with local health guidelines (e.g. groups of people on the trail or on the beach).
- Do not share images of risky or unsafe behaviour.
- Do not encourage people to travel to visit these locations, or to visit your business if you are not an essential service.
- Avoid sharing COVID-19 related information that is not directly relevant to your business.



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AMPLIFY YOUR POSTS BY USING:

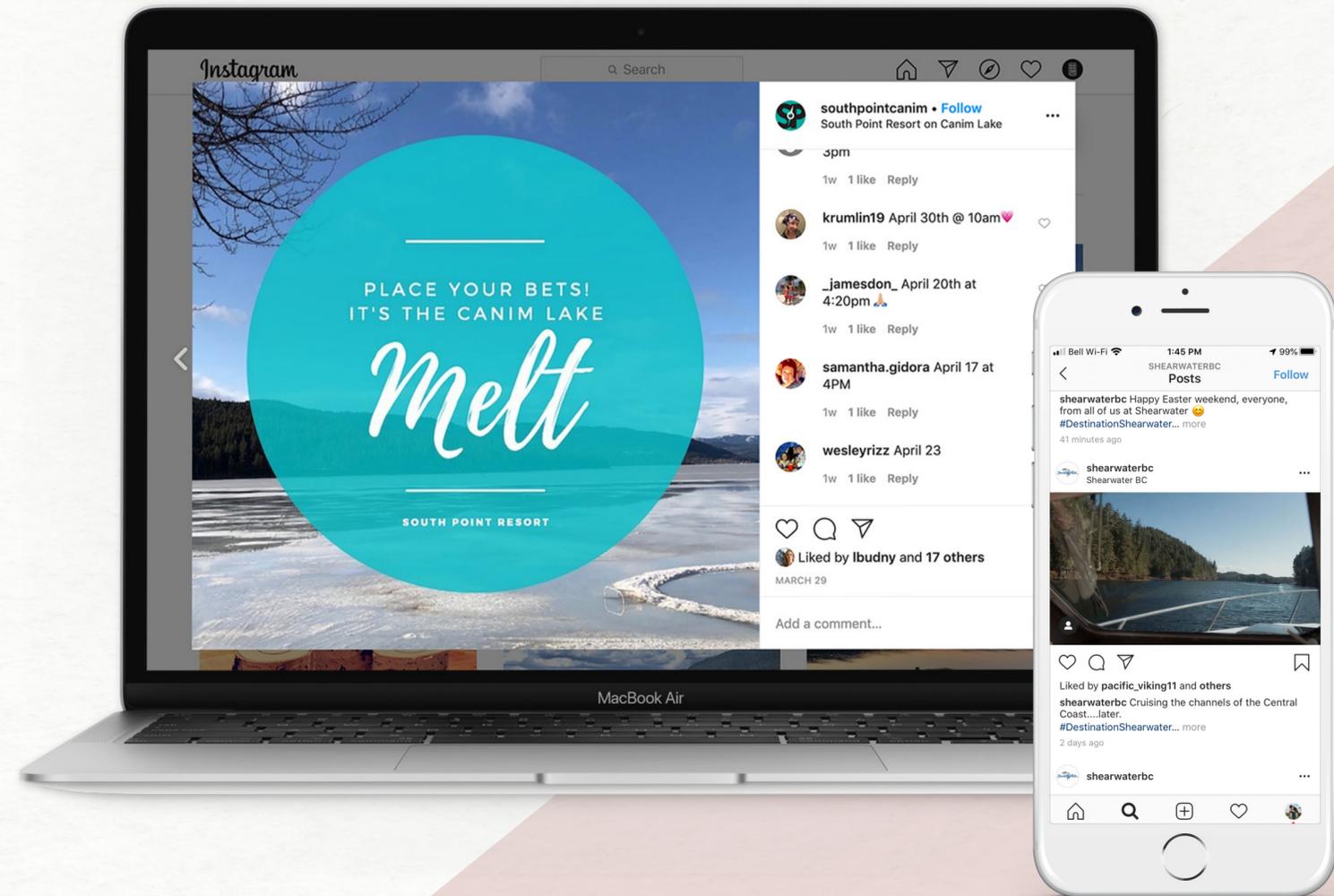
#RoamBCFromHome

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#CCCLives

SUPPORT THE PROVINCIAL MESSAGING WITH:

#ExploreBCLater



THEME FIVE

Family at Home

Our final theme unites all – young or old, we all have family that we are concerned about. In this theme, we want to focus on the light side of sharing fun ideas to keep your little ones busy – whether two-legged or four. This can also include wellness at home ideas for our education/wellness tourism providers.

DOS

- Do share arts and crafts with the kids.
- Do share games to play with the kids, pets, or both.
- Do share colouring books, online videos, and other educational content.
- Do show the local fauna and flora near you.

Always practice COVID-19 related tips in content if relevant (e.g. washing hands for 20 seconds, handling groceries/packaging, etc.) If you receive questions around health orders, direct followers to government resources.

DON'TS

- Do not give an estimated time of reopening.
- Do not share personal information.
- Do not encourage people to travel to visit these locations, or to visit your business if you are not an essential service.
- Avoid sharing COVID-19 related information that is not directly relevant to your business.



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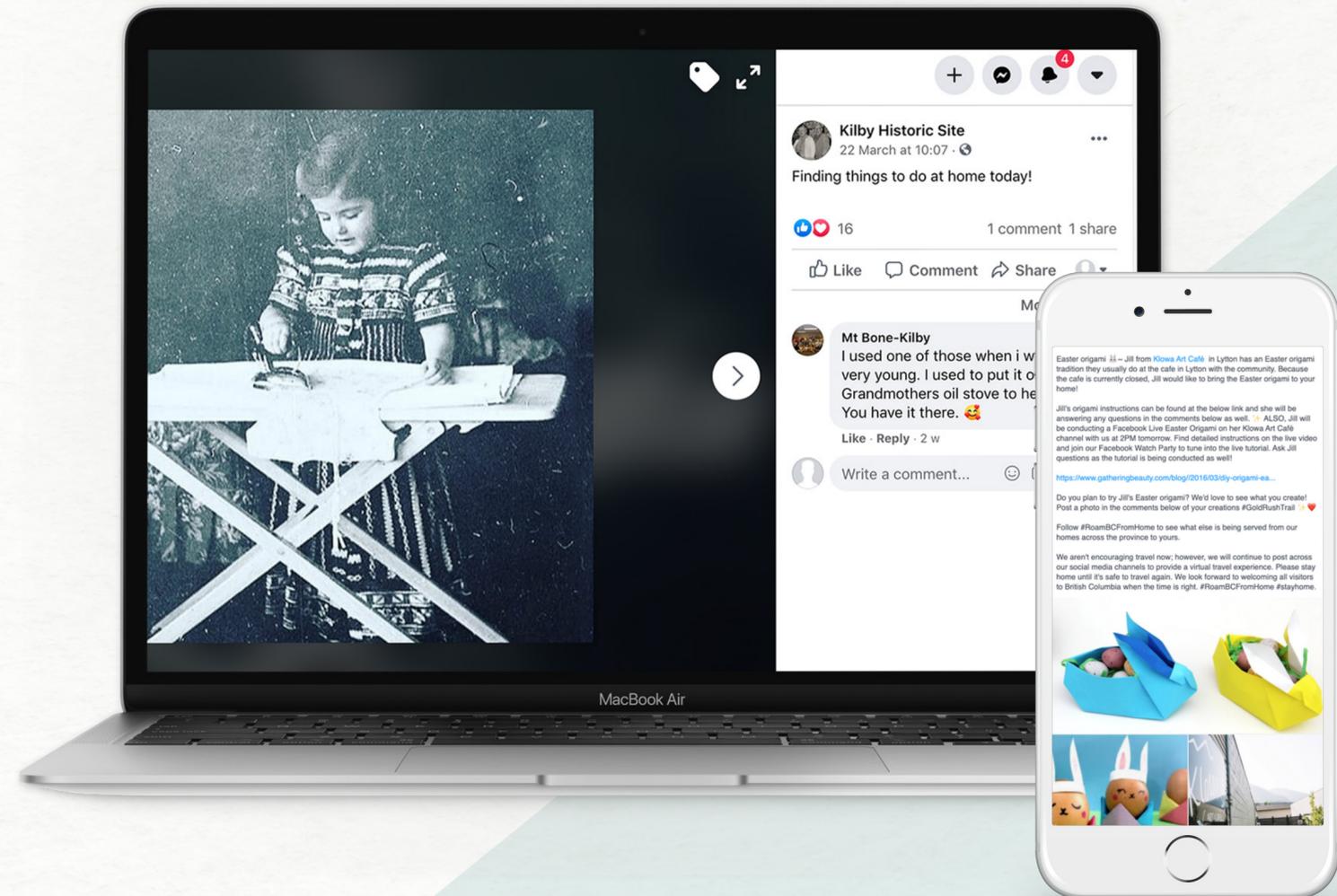
#RoamBCFromHome

TAP INTO YOUR REGIONAL TOURISM HASHTAG:

#CCCLives

SUPPORT THE PROVINCIAL MESSAGING WITH:

#ExploreBCLater



Engagement Responses

It can be hard to know how to respond to comments. We've compiled some community management best practices for you, as well as some of the responses we use when engaging on social media at this time.

If you receive questions around health orders, direct followers to government resources.

Here are some tips best practices around community management:

- Managing negative comments. Carefully weigh the value in responding to negative comments. Focus on communicating facts or correcting misinformation. Avoid getting into back-and-forth arguments that will not provide value to the individual or online community.
- Be helpful, but when it's appropriate. Answer questions regarding your own business but avoid speaking on behalf of any one else including the industry as a whole, government or healthcare professionals.
- Maintain your response cadence. Undoubtedly, it may be more challenging right now to respond to messages and comments but try to respond in a timely manner or at least maintain your response time frames you outline in your community management guidelines.
- Use the appropriate tone. Be genuine, friendly, calm. Avoid confrontational or aggressive language. Recognize that some users may be going through a very difficult time.

When replying to comments, here are some ways you can respond:

- *We look forward to welcoming you to [place] when it's safe to travel again.*
- *We're sorry you had to change your trip plans; we look forward to the day when we can all explore again. In the meantime, stay safe and healthy.*
- *Visit our page for daily inspiration and positivity if you're needing a boost. We will all be able to get out and explore again one day!*
- *It is such a hard time for many, we're so sorry to hear this.*
- *We definitely wish things were different, and that we could all travel right now. We look forward to the day when it's safe to hit the road and explore.*
- *We hope you can come visit when it's safe to travel again. Thanks for sharing your photos!*
- *We hope you are able to rebook instead of cancelling your trip completely. Please keep an eye on @HelloBC's website for the most up to date information about travelling in BC: <https://www.hellobc.com/what-you-need-to-know/>*
- *Our fingers are crossed that you can visit sooner than later. We can't wait to welcome everyone back to [place] one day. Happy you found some comfort with this soothing video, [name]. We thought it was the perfect way to start the day!*
- *Wishing you all the best, and we look forward to welcoming you back to [place] as soon as it's possible.*
- *Here's to hoping we can invite visitors back by then (or even sooner). Thank you for rebooking and not cancelling altogether.*
- *We can't predict when it'll be safe to travel, but we hope to welcome visitors back this year. @HelloBC has an informative page on their website with links to the most up to date travel information: <https://www.hellobc.com/what-you-need-to-know/> Hope you are staying safe and healthy.*

Content Types

Slow Video: These are longer videos of one action. They aren't edited, rather the camera is set up to run for a long period of time and uploaded as is. If you have a scenic spot, this is a great way of sharing it.

Micro Moments: Providing quick clips of moments at your business gives followers a moment of relief: think the sun coming through the trees in the forest or the animals on the farm running across the field. Short 10-15 second clips are ideal here.

How To's: Provide educational content to your followers. It can be through short videos, graphics, or even just step by step in images.

User Generated Content: Share throwback photos of visitors coming last summer, or highlight some of your favourite guest images.

Live Videos: Showing what you're currently doing is a great way of humanizing your business. If you're a restaurant owner, consider a live cook along, or a tutorial on your favourite recipe..

Please ensure your content reinforces the stay at home message and physical distancing guidelines.

Tools

If you need support with compiling graphics or scheduling your posts, there are many ways to make this simple for you. Here are some quick 5-minute tutorials if you need help navigating posting to social media:

The Basics

Video: [How To Post On Facebook](#)

Article: [How To Post On Facebook](#)

Video: [How To Post On Instagram](#)

Article: [How to Post Photos on Instagram](#) and [How to Post Videos on Instagram](#)

Additional Resources

[10 Facebook Live Tips: Before, During & After](#)

[Step-By-Step Guide to Instagram Live](#)

[Simple Tips to Make Your Videos More Professional](#)

Program Resources

We recognize that writing posts at this time can be challenging. We've crafted some boilerplate messages for you to help during this time. If you'd like to chat about how to write your own posts, please reach out to us.

We're using messaging similar to this on all our posts, where possible:

Follow #RoamBCFromHome to see what else is being shared from our homes across the province to yours.

We aren't encouraging travel now; however, we will continue to provide virtual travel experiences across our social media channels. Please stay home until it's safe to travel again. We look forward to welcoming all visitors to British Columbia when the time is right. #RoamBCFromHome #stayhome.

For platforms that don't allow for that much content, be sure to include #StayHome messaging in a shorter format. First and foremost is the safety of our residents.

Long Weekend Messaging

With long weekends and holidays, it's more important than ever that we encourage our followers to follow the stay home guidelines and stay safe. You can still share your ideas on how people can enjoy the holiday from home, whether it be sharing Easter recipes or hosting a livestream picnic concert for May Long Weekend. It's our opportunity to show leadership and encourage good behaviour. Here's some messaging you can use during holiday and long weekends:

The long weekend is here, but this is not the time to travel, it's imperative you stay in your community to help stop the spread of COVID-19. All BC Parks, National Parks, and Recreation Sites and their services are closed until further notice. Please respect the advice of health authorities and the limited resources in many of the communities in our region. The more we do now, the sooner we can all explore BC again.