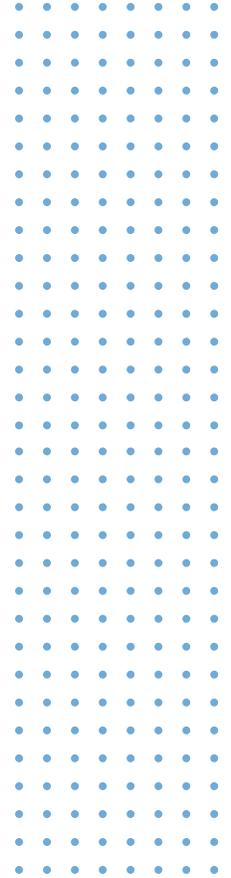
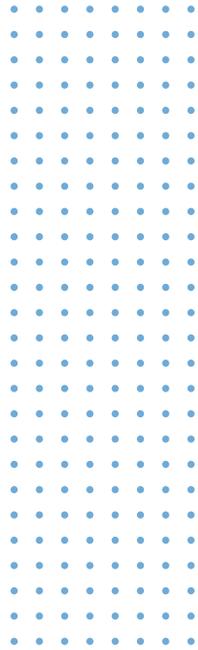

Content Guide
FOR HIGHER ED ADVANCEMENT TEAMS

Content Guide

FOR HIGHER ED ADVANCEMENT TEAMS



How To Use This Guide.



The Content Guide has two sections: a Content Worksheet and Content Best Practices.

The Content Worksheet is intended to help you craft the story your content is telling. It's here to get the creative juices of your team flowing in a way that allows you to take a story and create a **ton of content** based on the ideas your team generates. Content begets content, so don't just crank out a press release and call it a day - find inventive, easy ways to tell your story among a myriad of platforms!

That leads us to the Content Best Practices section. This section of the guide is here to give you some current guidelines and direction on how to format that content for the various distribution platforms available to you right now. The digital world is a lot like the wild west: the rules are constantly changing, and what works today may not work tomorrow. We've assembled this list of best practices for you in an aim to give you a snapshot of what's working right now, in Summer 2020... but we can guarantee that some of these things will still be true in a few months, and others will look somewhat different.

When it comes to content creation, there's really only one firm ground to stand on: **tell a great story**. The rest is just details.



Content Worksheet

SUBJECT

Who is the story about? (Select one or more):

- A student
- A faculty member
- An alumnus
- A parent
- A staff member
- A donor
- A friend of your college/university

CONTEXT

The context is where the subject is and what they are doing. For example, a lab, a classroom, a food kitchen. It's the setting of the story.

What's the context for your story?

STORY PROMPT

The story prompts are the questions that the content piece looks to answer. They are the questions you need to ask to show how the subject and your university are doing good in the world.

To get you started, here are some sample questions that can be taken and adapted to shape the story you want to tell.

"How is the subject living into the core values and the mission of your university?"

"What specific core value is being lived into and how?"

"What are the specifics of the initiative?"

"Who else is involved?"

"Where did the inspiration to do this come from?"

"What have been the biggest challenges so far?"



Content Worksheet

“What challenges does the subject anticipate in the future?”
“How will increased funding for this initiative expand its impact and likelihood for success?”
“What’s the end goal?”
“What has worked? What hasn’t?”
“How did this initiative start?”
“How has the subject’s particular set of skills/values/expertise informed the initiative?”
“Is this initiative something your college/university is uniquely positioned to do? If so, what makes it special or unique?”
“What does success look like? Failure?”

CONTENT FORMAT

The question to ask here is, what format allows the story to best be told? Refer to the Content Format: Best Practices section on [page 5](#) for specifications, ratios, and tips.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Video (Feed) | <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram Video (Reels) | <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Mail - Personalized Letter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Video (Stories) | <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram Static Post (Feed) | <input type="checkbox"/> Text Message |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Static Post (Feed) | <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram Static Post (Stories) | <input type="checkbox"/> ThankView |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Static Post (Stories) | <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter | <input type="checkbox"/> Automated Email Receipt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram Video (Feed) | <input type="checkbox"/> Email Blast | <input type="checkbox"/> Blog Post/Article |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram Video (Stories) | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Email | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram Video (IGTV) | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Note | <input type="checkbox"/> Press Release |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Infographic |

DISTRIBUTION METHOD

How are you going to deliver the content? Check all that apply. (Crosscheck best practices, where applicable, on [page 5](#).)

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook | <input type="checkbox"/> Text Message | <input type="checkbox"/> Blog/Article |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram | <input type="checkbox"/> Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Press Release |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter | <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Mail | <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional Media (Radio/TV) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email | <input type="checkbox"/> ThankView | |



Content Best Practices

SUMMER 2020

Use this section as a quick go-to guide for choosing, creating, and distributing your content. It's not exhaustive, of course, but it's meant to hit the high points. For each of these, the most important thing to keep top of mind is that each piece of content needs tell the primary story you mapped out on the content worksheet, while simultaneously providing value for those who are going to experience it.



Facebook: Video Post

	MAIN FEED	STORIES
DIMENSIONS	Ratio: 16:9	Ratio: 9:16
DURATION/ LENGTH	1 second to 240 minutes	15-second or less (or a sequence of 15-second videos)
PLATFORM SPECIFICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remains in feed, but may not show up in your followers' feeds for a day or two• File Size: < 4 GB• Most videos are consumed with audio off, so include captions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stories should be timely since they expire within 24 hours• Most videos are consumed with audio off, so include captions text as possible
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be boosted or run as an ad	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best for informal posts, up-to-the-minute updates• Posts cannot be boosted to run as an ad, but can be run as an ad and placed in stories





Instagram: Video Post

	MAIN FEED	STORIES
DIMENSIONS	Landscape Ratio: 1:91:1 Square Ratio: 1:1 Vertical Ratio: 4:5	Ratio: 9:16
DURATION/ LENGTH	Video less than 60 seconds can be posted directly to feed	15-second or less (or a sequence of 15-second videos)
PLATFORM SPECIFICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Format: MP4 or MOV• Max file size is 4GB• Most videos are consumed with audio off, so include captions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stories should be timely, they expire within 24 hours.• Accounts with 10K+ followers can include a swipe up link in stories• If using a swipe up link, leave 250 pixels without important elements at the top and bottom for your Instagram username and logo at the top and bottom of your video• Most videos are consumed with audio off, so include text callouts
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These videos work best with taller pixel ratios if possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IG Stories is a great option for shorter videos with clear calls to action (CTAs). Keep them short and to the point.• Cannot be boosted to run as an ad, but can be run as an ad directly placed in stories





Instagram: Video Post

	IGTV	REELS
DIMENSIONS	Ratio Minimum: 4:5 Ratio Maximum: 9:16	Ratio: 9:16
DURATION/ LENGTH	Post videos that are between 15 seconds and 10 minutes for non-verified accounts; larger and verified accounts can upload videos up to 60 min long	15-seconds or less
PLATFORM SPECIFICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• File Type: MP4• Video Size: For unverified accounts, max file size of 650MB; for verified accounts, 5.4 GB	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reels is Instagram's answer to TikTok• Using Reels, Instagram users can record and edit together 15-second video clips set to music and share them to their Stories, Explore Feed, and the new Reels tab on a user's profile• Reels differ from stories in that they are intentionally audio-driven, and can be tied together using the same audio like a hashtag.
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note: Make sure to choose a great preview image while posting these. Choose an interesting frame to use as the preview image that has good composition• You can choose to post a preview in your main feed - and you should!• Posts cannot be run as ads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This feature was newly rolled out in August 2020 and still has a ton of room for growth• But, with growing concerns about privacy on TikTok, it's a tremendous opportunity for brands to be on the front edge of this growing feature





Facebook: Static Post

	MAIN FEED	STORIES
DIMENSIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image Ratio: 1200 x 628 px; min width & height: 600 px • Aspect Ratio: 9:16 to 16:9, but crops to 1.91:1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended Image Size: 1080 x 1920 (but keep your text within 1080 x 1420) • Image Ratio: 1.91 to 9:16
FILE FORMAT	JPG and PNG	JPG and PNG
PLATFORM SPECIFICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more than 20% text in image if being used in ads • Copy: Optimal length is 80 words or less, sentence case, in most instances. You can tell a longer story here on occasion, but it shouldn't be the norm. If your copy is too long, drive the user to a blog or an article instead • When posting a link, utilize the preview feature and delete the in-text link once the preview shows up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Images no more than 20% text • If using a link, leave 250 pixels without important elements at the top and bottom
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that posts are clean looking and composed well. These will live in your feed forever unless they are deleted • Deliver enough value to make the content engaging for the viewer: they should want to click through, react, comment and share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make messaging quick and to the point





Instagram: Static Post

	MAIN FEED	STORIES
DIMENSIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ratio: 1:1• Recommended Image Size: 1080 x 1080 px	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aspect Ratio: 9:16• Recommended Resolution: 1080 x 1920 pixels• Minimum Resolution For Stories Ads: 600 x 1067 pixels
FILE FORMAT	Image file types: JPG or PNG	All formats should be either JPG or PNG
PLATFORM SPECIFICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20% or less text in image so you can use in an ad	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Max Image Size: 30MB
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use well-curated content, spend some extra time to edit these posts and make them look nice since they will live on your feed forever unless they are deleted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make messaging quick and to the point• Be sure to leave 250 pixels without important elements at the top and bottom for your Instagram username and logo at the top and the swipe up call to action at the bottom of your image• Cannot be boosted to run as an ad, but can be run as an ad directly placed in stories• Accounts with 10K+ followers can include a swipe up link in stories





Twitter: Static Post

MAIN FEED	
PLATFORM SPECIFICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 280 characters, although shorter is better
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great way to share links • Leverage the mention feature to tag relevant accounts (people, businesses, etc.)

Email

	EMAIL BLAST	AUTOMATED EMAIL RECEIPT	PERSONAL EMAIL
PLATFORM SPECIFICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All emails should include a link to a relevant webpage or landing page to take the reader into the right next step 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link back to further content to keep the donor engaged • Be sure to include the necessary IRS tax receipt disclaimer and donation receipt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be succinct - if it merits more than 1-2 paragraphs, pick up the phone
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails should provide value, which means that, whenever possible, give the reader information that makes their life better, answers their questions, or gives them a story to think about and draw inspiration from • Craft a compelling headline: use action words, keep it short, and catch the reader's attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sincerely thank the donor • Utilize an email layout that showcases photos of specific initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This style of email should feel personal: use their name, talk about something specific to the individual, shouldn't feel boilerplate • Use personal email for relational things like stewardship and scheduling, less for an ask - save that for in person as much as possible.



Direct Mail

	PERSONAL NOTE	PERSONALIZED LETTER
PLATFORM SPECIFICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwritten is best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalized name in greeting • Personally signed by the author (or digitally printed signature) • Make sure to tell or reference the overarching message of your initiative
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be gracious • Extra awesome if it comes from a student/faculty member who represents the program funded by the donor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While this copy will be the same for all, it should feel significant and compelling in its storytelling and connection to the overarching message of your initiative

Public Relations

	BLOG/ARTICLE	INTERVIEW	PRESS RELEASE
PLATFORM SPECIFICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep it on point and brief: 350 - 700 words • Link to additional content in order to keep the reader engaged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer questions determined for content piece from the worksheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell a story: as humans we are drawn to story. Highlight your hero, show the problem she faces, discuss how she's solving the problem, and showcase the results (if applicable) • Include all relevant details, so journalists have everything they need with a minimum of follow-up
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use quality images that represent your story well • Include callouts in copy when possible • Craft a compelling title and subtitle, which means using action words, keeping it short, creating the need to know more, and avoiding industry jargon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief... but no briefer than necessary • Tie discussion back to the larger message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft a compelling headline, which means using action words, keeping it short, and avoiding industry jargon • Keep it concise • Include a great callout quote • Use visual content • Create a great last paragraph • Include a clear Call to Action (What do you want the reader to do next?)



Other

	TEXT MESSAGE	THANKVIEW VIDEOS	INFOGRAPHIC
PLATFORM SPECIFICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make as short as possible• Focus on value, not the ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short and sweet• Tie back to the overarching message of your initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infographics are a great way to represent a point or a takeaway you want to get across in an impactful, visual way
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send a photo/short video where you can• Mass texts should be sent to only those who have opted in	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be gracious• Make it as personalized as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make it simple, beautiful, and clear• Ensure it can be clearly perceived at a small size on a mobile screen as well as a large digital screen



We're here for you.

We hope that this resource is tremendously helpful to you as you tell your stories in new and creative ways. We firmly believe that you and your teams have an opportunity in this moment to do an even greater amount of good than ever before, and we're excited to see what you come up with.

If there's ever anything we can do to help you in your efforts, we're here for you. Just reach out and let's talk.



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