# CoClicCo
a practical guide on social media for your community organization

This tool aims to help you decide whether your organization should be on social media-- and if so, what. Even more importantly, we want this tool to help organizations **ensure that their social media strategy is designed to support their mission.** It will lead you through a series of questions and exercises that will ground and structure your social media around that core question: how can social media advance our cause?

In the process, we hope to provide ways of understanding how **totally different social media is than other, more traditional, marketing strategies.** Social media disrupts, challenges, alters what it means to do outreach, marketing, or publicity for nonprofits, and we shouldn't try to approach it in the same ways as our other channels. People often use the term "conversation" to describe how to approach social media. Like a good conversation, social media requires creativity, flexibility, and reflection-- but most importantly, **we need to listen as much as we talk.**
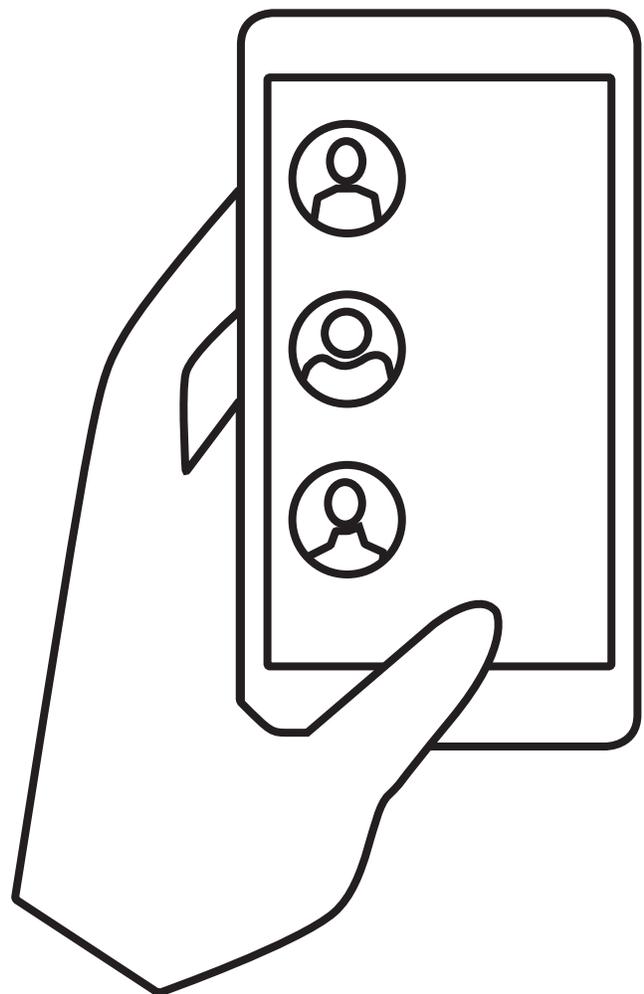
Defining Your Objectives

The most important thing about social media is to know why you are doing it. Are you trying to attract more donations? Are you trying to recruit volunteers? Are you trying to increase understanding of an issue? Are you trying to create a better relationship between your nonprofit and the community? Most organizations have a number of different roles for their social media, and you can make them more precise than the ones above.

When making your goals, make sure they are aligned with your mission, and any other strategic directions, theory of change, or action plan your organization has in place. Your social media needs to fit within, and support, the larger goals of the organization.

Two of COCO's social media objectives are:

1.
Increase understanding of our work. People know who we are, but aren't clear on what we do. Hopefully, this will increase people thinking to call us when they have a problem at their organization!

2.
Increase use of our resources, and other people's resources. Part of our mission is to connect nonprofits with helpful resources and tools-- this is a way for us to do that.

Another organization, which focuses on using legal tools to fight for environmental justice, believes their online community is key to all of their victories. They shared their high-level social media objectives with us:

1.
Financial Support: our online donors contribute to support the costs of our work.

2.
Changing the Conversation: our online supporters are engaged and knowledgeable. Their involvement advances our programmatic goals.

3.
Spreading the word: our online community is growing.

Often, our objectives overlap. Here are a few examples of possible objecties:
- Que tous les objectifs traitent de collecte de dons

Spreading the word about our activities   Showing our impact   **Reach certain audiences**

Collaborating with other organizations who share a similar mission

Experiment and test new ideads   Evaluate our work   **Increase pool of applicants**

Document our activities in writing and in pictures

Be an alternative to a traditional website   sell services or products

Publicizing events and getting more registrations   **Mobilize our community**

Traps to avoid

- Writing objectives that are too general or too broad. If your objective is to "reach your community", can you make that more precise?
- Thinking social media will solve all of your problems
- Thinking about social media the same way as other publicity strategies, without understanding the "social" part
- Using organization accounts in the same way you use your personal account

It's your turn! Use the examples and advice we have given to write your own objectives. Here are some questions to get you started:

- What areas of your organization could benefit from a social media strategy?
- What are the thing you already do well on social media?
- How does your ecosystem-- your members, users, partners, neighbourhood, Board, etc-- already benefit from social media in general?

The mission of our organization is...
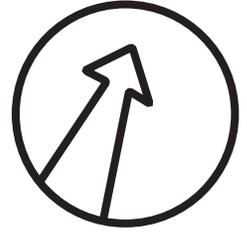
We achieve our mission through the following activities...
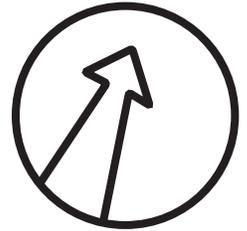
Our social media strategy can support our mission by...
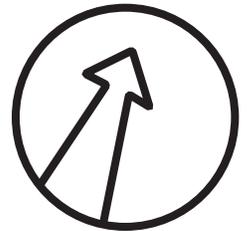
Fill in each 3 objectives for your organization:

Objective #1:

Objective #2:

Objective #3:

Telling Your Story

Usually, and certainly on social media, we have very little time to communicate our message. It helps to have practiced, short, refined pitches, descriptions and concepts to guide your online presence. These questions will help guide that process, and will become elements of a social media strategy. You can return to them when you are designing content, writing a blog post, or asking for a donation or subscription. It helps to run them by people-- some who you work with, others who you don't-- to help refine and create the most compelling message you can. In other words, we are asking you to think about your organization identity so we can make sure it is loud and clear in the context of your social media presence.

Pour commencer, vous pouvez vous poser les questions suivantes:

- **What do we do?**
- What is the problem we are trying to solve?
- **What is our solution to this problem?**
- Why and how are we a credible organization?
- **What do we bring that is unique?**

- **Who are we?**
- How did our organization begin?
- **What have been some of our important successes?**

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- **If you wrote a biography of your organization, what would the jacket cover say?**
- What are your core values? Do you have concrete examples of how you live those values?

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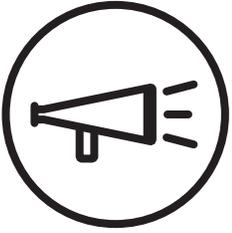
Culture & Tone

- Is your tone angry and militant? Warm and welcoming?
- As an example. at COCo, we think of our tone as "fun and flirty", while also consistently and gently questioning the status quo.

- **Pretend your organization was a person. If people "met" your organization, what adjectives would they use to describe it?**

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Understanding Your Audience

It's been long understood in marketing that pushing the same message on everyone just isn't going to work. Instead, it is important for organizations to have understandings of their different audiences, and how to reach out to each one. To get us started, we're going to create imaginary 'profiles' of people who represent an entire "section" of our audience.

Pour penser à toutes les parties possibles de votre audience, pensez aux groupes comme:

Partner organizations

Current and potential donors
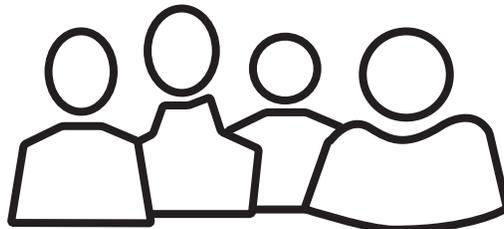
Current and potential members
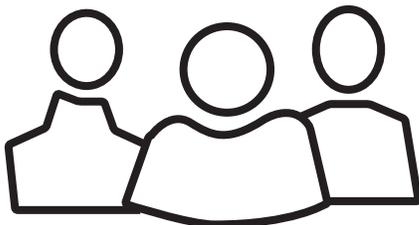
Current and potential volunteers
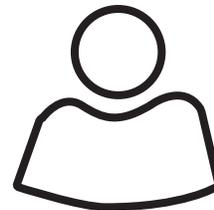
Journalists and media

Here are some audience profiles we imagined for a fictional housing committee.

Current Volunteer

Age: 26
Languages: mostly French
Platforms: very active on Twitter and Facebook

Andrea recently finished a degree in social work at UQAM, and she wants to get to find a long term commitment to an organization in her neighbourhood. She wants to feel like she belongs in an organization that shares her values and that is effective and strategic in their work.

Andrea the Activist

Current Member

Age: 65 ans
Languages: Her first language is Spanish, but she is comfortable in French and a bit of English
Platforms: She uses Facebook once in a while and reads her email every morning

Rina lives alone in an apartment in her neighbourhood. She is looking for resources to help her in her conflict with her landlord, who is trying to force her to leave so he can hike the rent. She doesn't know much about community organiations, but she really wants to find some new friends.

Rina the Renter

Potential Volunteer

Age: 35
Languages: French, English, Arabic
Platforms: He uses Facebook, LinkedIn, and email on her phone

Pascha recently moved and doesn't know much about the history of the neighbourhood or the social issues in the area. However, he was really involved in his last neighbourhood's social committee and has a lot of skills in media and communications.

Pascha the Professional

Let's find out more about your audience with the following questions:

- How would these people describe their own interests, concerns, and skills?
- What worries would they have that would stop them from getting involved?
- What communications tools do these people use to stay informed?

Name:

Role:

Age:

Languages:

Platforms:

Other details:

Name:

Role:

Age:

Languages:

Platforms:

Other details:

Name:

Role:

Age:

Languages:

Platforms:

Other details:

Choosing Your Platforms

When choosing your platforms, you should think about a number of factors, including your current resources, our knowledge and skills, our objectives, and our target audience.

We have included some information here about the most used platforms. You can use this information, as well as the voice and goals of your organization, to decide which platforms would be the best fit for you. It is definitely better to be on less platforms, but do them well, than be on every social media platform poorly, so choose wisely!
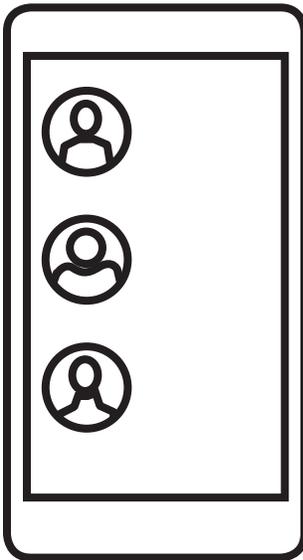
Tip: Try to keep the name of your organization as consistent as possible across platforms, and to choose a name that reflects how the public knows you. Make sure your logo is visible on each of your platforms.

Tip: Don't forget that you don't want the same content on all of your platforms. While there can be some crossover, but make sure that overall, your content is different across platforms. This is because your content should build off of the unique audience or style of each platform, and because many people will follow you on all of your platforms. Keep them interested!

Tip: Choose platforms that you like! You are much more likely to do a good job if you're enjoying yourself.

Facebook is the most used social network by all ages, but especially by young adults. It is also the most used platform by nonprofits. Although we often hear news about the "fall of Facebook", it is still the behemoth of social media, and it's likely your organization should invest here. More excitingly, Facebook has the best data to help your organization refine its strategy, so you'll feel less like you're shooting in the dark.

Time Commitment: 1-5 hours.
Frequency: 1-2x a day.
Audience: There is a lot of conflicting data on this, but the general consensus comes to something like: it is the most used network by people over 30. While people under 30 use it a lot, it is not their favourite. 5. More interestingly, 65% of Quebec residents use Facebook, considerably over the national average.
Costs associated: The platform is free, but advertising is paid, albeit inexpensively.

Twitter Twitter is usually listed as the runner up-- both in terms of worldwide usage, and in terms of how many nonprofits are investing their time here. Twitter is used as a source of news, real time information, and quick responses to current events. It is a great choice for organizations involved in campaigns, who are tied to the news cycle, or who want to document actions and events. If one of your goals was to "change the conversation", Twitter is a great place to start. On the other hand, Twitter requires much more immediate engagement (scheduled posts are not your best strategy), and has a learning curve if you are new to the platform.

Time Commitment: 5+, to do it well.
Audience: millennials are the most active (27% of 18-29 year olds, versus 16% of people over 30). Twitter is, unusually, used fairly equally by people across income brackets.
Costs associated: Free, with paid advertising,
Frequency: 3x day minimum, although you can more easily have silent periods with few repercussions.

LinkedIn was a website initially made as a sort of "job search" board, that has now expanded to professional networking in general. It also has a massive audience-- second only to Facebook in Canada, although it is used considerably more by anglophones. LinkedIn is most valuable as a recruitment resource (board members, volunteers, and staff) and for interacting with peer organizations and professionals (if, say, you want to inform the conversation about best practices in social work). It can be a great way to showcase your organization's resources. A key part of a LinkedIn strategy includes your staff using their personal accounts to promote your work, so make sure they are on board!

Time Commitment: To do LinkedIn well, invest at least 3-4 hours a week. You can easily, however, claim your company page and invest a few hours a month in keeping it up.
Audience: LinkedIn skews to people who are well-educated professionals. Unsurprisingly, this means it is used more by those between 30 and 50.
Costs: Free, with paid advertising (very expensive paid advertising).
Frequency: 1x day.

Instagram is one of the top 4 most popular platforms for nonprofits. An image sharing platform, instagram is a feel-good, visual heavy, and young. The positive-vibes feeling of the app also makes instagram users especially responsive to supporting causes and issues, although it's not easy monetize that support. Although Instagram offers very little analytic information about your account, they are planning to give organizations way more analytics and data on their engagement in the future.

Audience: 90% of instagram users are under 30, and is used evenly across income brackets. It is most used by people in cities.
Time Commitment: 2-5 hours/week.
Frequency: 1x day.

Pinterest is something like an online scrapbook or mood board. Used to share beautiful or inspirational images, pinterest can be a great choice if you have an image-ready mission. It can be a great way to reach a new audience with the videos, images, and infographics you are already making. It is the social media platform that has the best referral traffic, if you are trying to get people back to your website.

Time Commitment: there isn't great data on this, but it seems it is easy enough to start on pinterest using images and videos from other platforms-- and invest more if it seems worthwhile.
Audience: Users skew heavily towards women (84%) and tend to be wealthier, as well as older-- over 30, mostly. It's also the only network with more rural users than urban or suburban.
Costs: Free.

Snapchat is notoriously difficult to understand, but once you have a handle on it, this platform is a blast. It's images and videos-- which disappear after they are viewed-- can be a great way to share silly photos and behind-the-scenes shots. That said, It is definitely a challenge for nonprofits to figure out how to tell stories effectively on the app.

Time Commitment: probably considerable, especially since it is hard to gain followers, and there is a sharp learning curve. There's very little disadvantage to trying, though, if this is your user base.
Audience: 45% of snapchat users are under 24, but the over 24 segment of their users is growing rapidly. Either way, it a great go-to for youth engagement.
**Cost**: free, with paid ads

Best Practices

Here are 8 pieces of solid advice that apply no matter what.
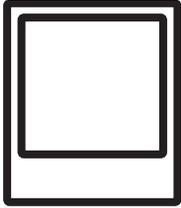
1.

Use photos. Pictures are the most popular kind of content, and you should take the time to take good quality photos. Many organizations do an amazing job spreading their message with photos, including with photos superimposed with text, information, or infographics.

2.

Make it collaborative. Use social media to promote content from other organizations, news outlets, activists or writers. Retweet, tag people and organizations in your posts, and write comments on other people's content when appropriate.
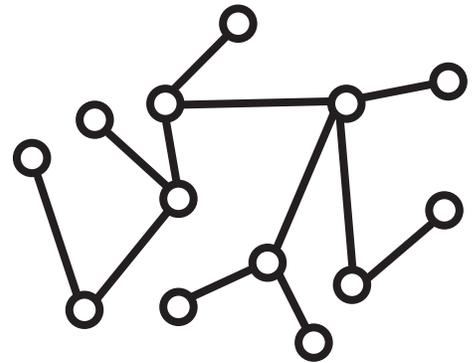
3.

Your content needs to be short and sweet, unlike traditional marketing or media work. For Facebook, try to not write more than 2 lines of text. For Twitter, the challenge is to communicate everything in 140 caracters. Without losing sight of the fact that you are representing an organization, use less formal or bureaucratic language, in favour of being more conversational. Try to give your organization a face by sharing about the day-to-day in the office!

4.

Stay positive, as often as you can. Congratulate other organizations or projects on their success, and celebrate your own victories. Thank your volunteers. Highlight when social change occurs. You can of course get angry about issues, but an online presence that is entirely angry or cynical rarely is successful-- especially for organizations, even more than people.
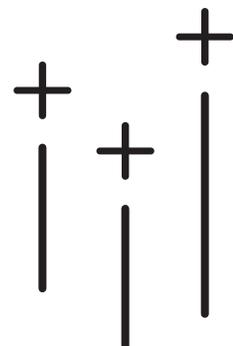
5.

Always tailor your message to your audience. Is this information interesting? Is the story touching? Are there useful resources? It is much better to have less, quality content, than more content that people can't use or don't understand. Don't forget that you can easily reuse good content for different audiences at different times.
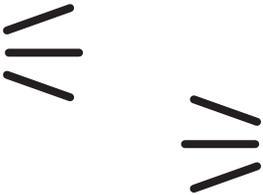
6.

Encourage engagement. Ask questions, encourage comments and participation on your platorms. Even if this seems hard, we have to work to make social media be truly social.
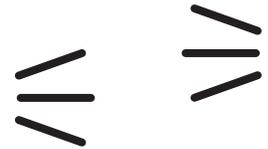
7.

Use the news to advance your cause. You will definitely see results if you can make the link between your organization's cause and the world around it. Share news articles related to your mission!
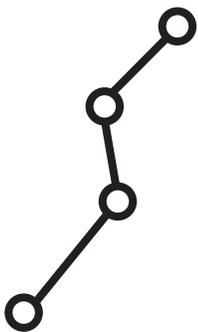
8.

Use well-established social media accounts to your advantage. Sometimes, you can identify partners who already have a strong social media presence, like your neighbourhood coalition, your funders, or your partners. You can ask them to post your information or stories, and make sure it redirects back to the account you are trying to build yourself.

Resources

One of the most pressing questions we get from nonprofits is about resources. While most channels are free, they often require significant time, and some training, structure, or policies to support them. One way to think about how to spend your resources is to on a scale from more passive, to more active, social strategies.

passive - - - - - - - - ─ active

For example, **a passive strategy** could be basic curation: finding articles, resources, information, or updates related to your cause but created by other people, posted with a brief comment from your organization. This kind of strategy could still meet objectives like educating your public, creating conversations around new ideas, and raising the profile of your cause.

A very active strategy could be to focus on creating original content, like running a blog. Creating good, original content takes time and energy, but can definitely pay off in the long term-- however, it is off limits to a lot of resource-tight organizations, and might not meet your objectives anyway.

Most organizations fall somewhere in the middle. However, if resources are a major concern for you, starting with a passive strategy can allow you to get familiar with social media at a low cost, while still being effective at reaching your goals. And remember: having less channels with quality content is always better than more channels done badly!

Creating Your Content

Using your objectives, your target audience, your organizational identity, and our tips, imagine some times of content you could create for each of the platforms your have chosen.

Use your objectives, as well as one of your target audeinces, to imagine what a Facebook post, or a Twitter campaign, might look like. Does the content also reflect the best practices we shared at the end of this guide? Which kind of content should be on which platform? The work you have done to outline your objectives, your tone and your audience, will help you generate content that truly supports your mission.

user
text

#hashtag

user ···

♥ ⬭ ↗

♥ **39 Likes**
user   text
#hashtag

─────── ···

♥ ⬭ ↗

♥   Likes
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♥ ⬭ ↗

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♥   Likes
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user

● Like ● Comment ● Share

● Like ● Comment ● Share

● Like ● Comment ● Share

● Like ● Comment ● Share

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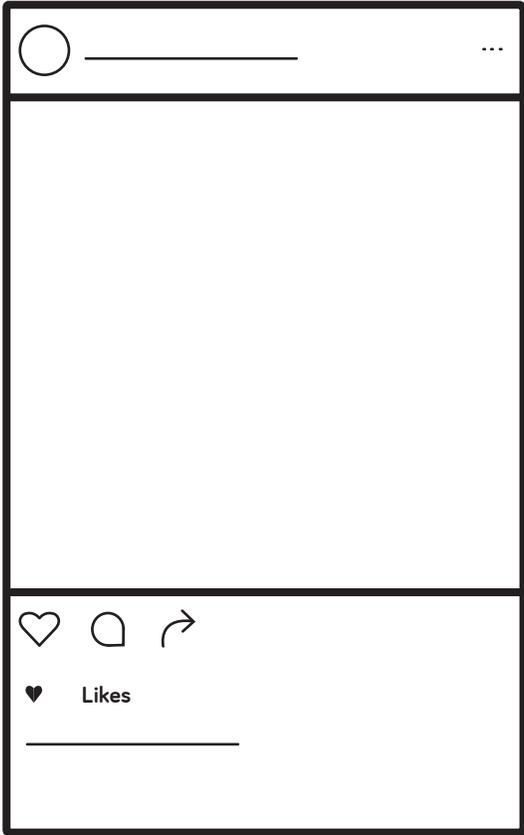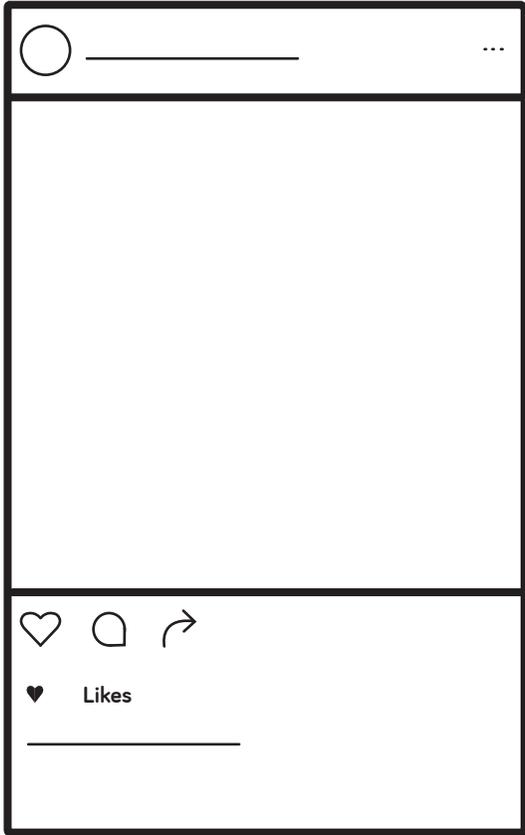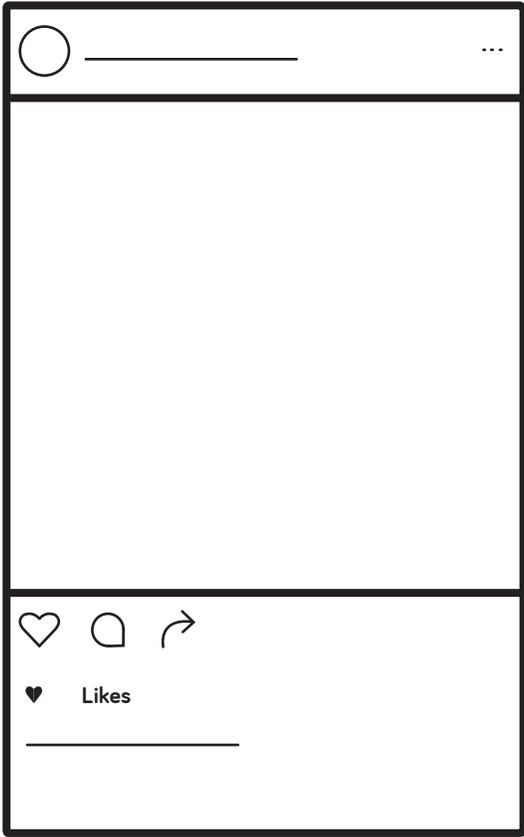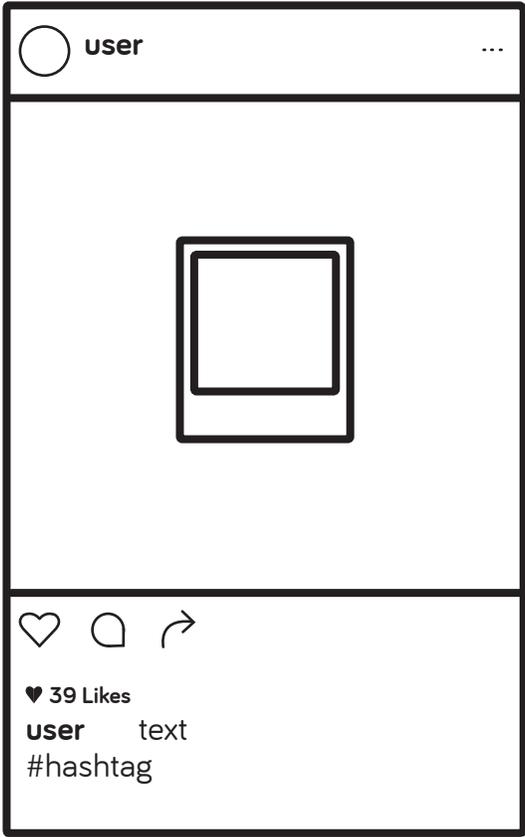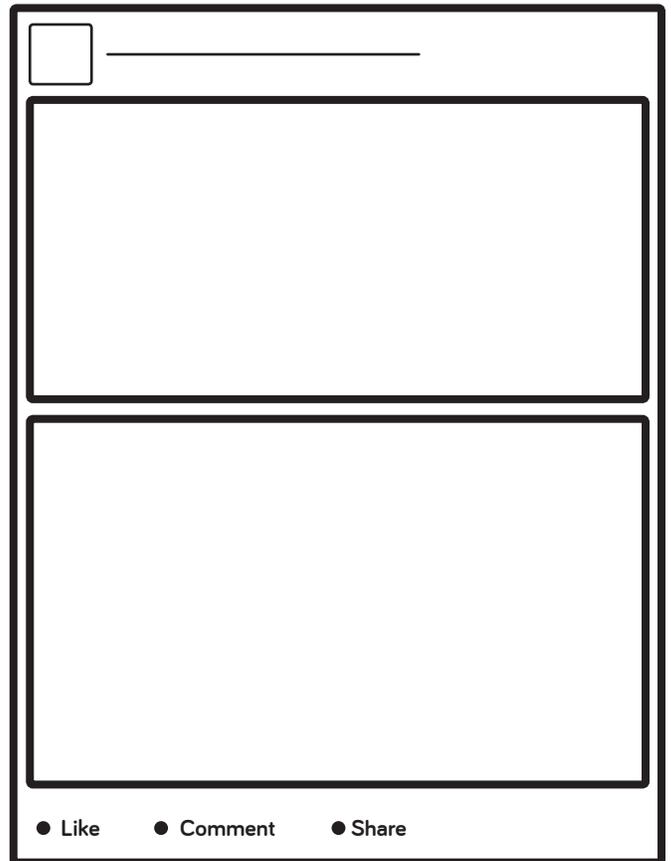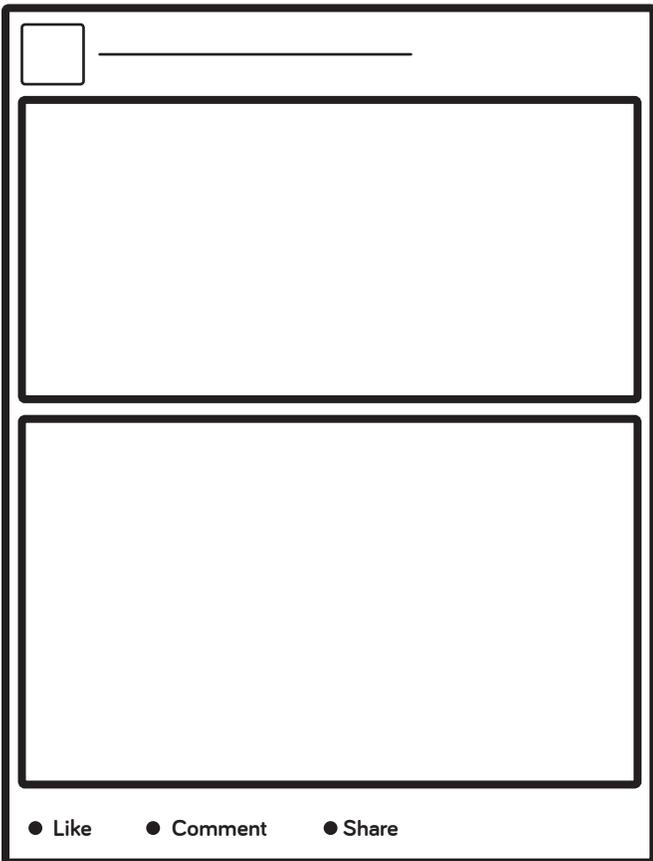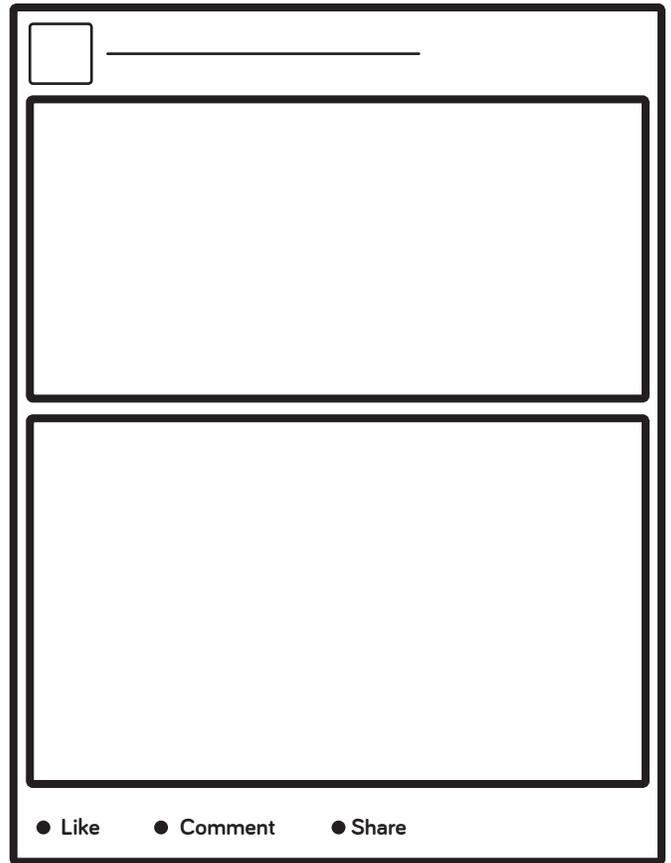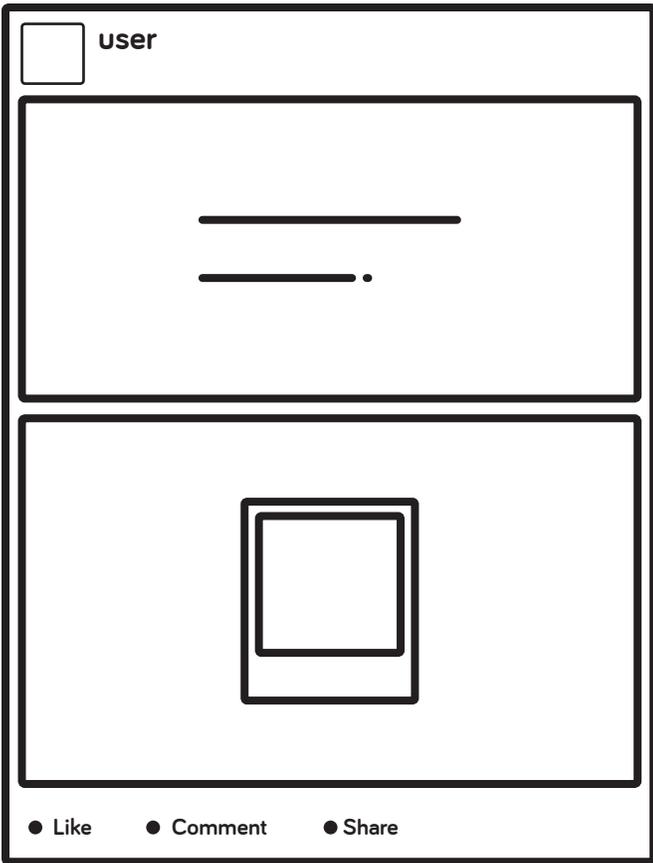
Congratulations on your hard work!
The effort you invested in this will ensure a solid
base for your social media presence in the future,
and help ensure that the time you put it into it
is worth every cent. et aidera à assurer que le

COCo

Centraide
du Grand Montréal