



FREE GUIDE · NO EMAIL REQUIRED

Growing on social without gimmicks.

What actually moves an account for a local business: the first 1.5 seconds, a cadence you can keep, and the four numbers worth watching. No hacks, no buying followers.

Almost every piece of social media advice aimed at small businesses is either a hack that stops working in a month, or vague encouragement to post more. Here is the version that has held up across seven years of doing this for other people's brands.

“Two posts a week, forever, beats fourteen and a flameout.”

Algorithms reward the reliable. Audiences trust the consistent. And consistency is only possible if the system producing the posts is cheap enough to sustain on a bad week. Build the cadence your system can carry, not the one motivation promises.

The first 1.5 seconds decide everything

On a phone, your post gets about a second and a half to earn the next five. Whatever your best moment is, it goes **first**. Not a slow build, not a logo, not a title card. The confetti drop, the reveal, the finished plate, the loudest reaction. Then the piece can breathe.

HOOK PATTERN	WHAT IT DOES	USE IT WHEN
Peak-first	Open on the best moment, then build back to it	You have one genuinely great frame or beat
Motion-in	Open mid-action, never on a static establishing shot	The work itself is physical or visual
Text tension	An on-screen line that demands resolution	The story is better than the footage

Example of text tension: *we had four hours to pull this off*. It is a question the viewer now needs answered.

Do not post the same file everywhere

A recap that lands on Instagram needs a different opening beat for TikTok and different pacing for YouTube. The edit is about eighty percent reusable. The first three seconds almost never are. Recut the opening for each platform and leave the rest alone.

Platforms change their specs constantly. The principles in the right-hand column outlive the specs.

PLATFORM	BEST CUT	WHAT IT REWARDS
Instagram Reels	15–45s vertical, polished	Aesthetic quality and shareability. Your grid doubles as a portfolio, so every post is a pitch.
TikTok	15–60s vertical, raw energy	Hook strength and authenticity over polish. A phone-shot behind-the-scenes can outperform the hero film.
YouTube & Shorts	Hero film plus 60s cuts	Watch time and search. This is your archive. Films live here for years and keep selling.
LinkedIn	Hero film plus a lesson in the caption	Professional context. Where the business clients who pay retainers actually scroll.
Facebook	Native video, local framing	Community and local reach. Still where a lot of small-town customers live.
Your own website	Hero film, embedded	Conversion. The film plays where the booking button lives.

Captions that earn the clip

The caption's job is to add the layer the video cannot: the **context** (four hours, two trucks, one storm), the **credit** (tag everyone, tagged posts travel), and the **door** (where to book, follow or learn more). Write it like a second hook, not a hashtag dump. A handful of specific tags beats thirty generic ones.

- Put the important words in the first line. The rest is hidden behind *more*.
- Add on-screen captions. Most people watch with the sound off, and the platforms will generate them for you now.
- Keep text out of the bottom quarter of the frame. The interface covers it.
- Use the platform's own music library rather than uploading a track, or your post can be muted for rights reasons.

Four numbers worth watching

NUMBER	WHERE TO FIND IT	WHAT IT TELLS YOU
Watch time or retention	Post insights	Whether your first 1.5 seconds work. The single most useful number you have.
Shares and saves	Post insights	Whether the post was worth passing on. Worth ten times a like.
Profile visits	Account insights	Whether the post made anyone curious about you rather than just entertained.
Link taps or calls	Account insights	Whether any of it turned into business. The only number that pays rent.

Follower count is the number everybody watches and the one that matters least. A thousand local followers who can actually walk into your shop is worth more than fifty thousand scattered across the country.

- Buying followers or engagement. It poisons your reach, because the platform shows your next post to the fake accounts first and they do not respond.
- Follow-for-follow. Same problem, slower.
- Posting the same thing every day so the account looks busy. Repetition without variety trains people to scroll past you.
- Chasing every trend. A trend that has nothing to do with your business confuses the algorithm about who to show you to.
- Deleting posts that underperform. It teaches you nothing and the account loses history.

What is realistic

For a local business posting twice a week with real photos: expect the first three months to feel like nothing is happening, because it mostly is not. Somewhere in months four to six a post finds an audience outside your followers and the account starts compounding. The businesses that quit almost always quit in month three.

The one rule underneath all of it: never let good work sit unposted. Every job you finish should exist somewhere a future customer can trip over it. That is how cold traffic becomes warm inbound over a year.