Sprout Social Guide

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THE WHY's BEHIND SPROUT

What is Sprout Social?

"Sprout Social is a social media management and intelligence tool for brands and agencies of all sizes to manage conversations and surface the actionable insights that drive real business impact"

How does Sprout support our Y?

Sprout allows us to create, post, and respond to all our social media accounts from one place, saving tons of time and creative energy. Instead of having to log in and create posts from scratch on each social media platform, we can do it all from within Sprout.

Sprout also allows us to track engagement and understand our who and how far we are reaching with every post. There is a lot of data and reporting available, but this information is primarily for Marketing to use to ensure we are serving each of you, our sites, and our programs properly. If you are curious and want to know more, you are more than welcome to explore some of these additional capabilities within the Sprout platform.

In addition to this guide, Sprout also offers its own tutorials on the functions and fundamentals of its platform. If you are looking for more information, take a look at the Sprout Learning Portal.

What is my role in Sprout Social?

You are there, in the sites, living and witnessing the stories that we want to tell about the incredible work being done for the kids, families, and communities we serve. Social Media is an almost-instant, highly effective communication tool that allows us to keep in touch with these families and communities. By enabling you to lead storytelling for your site through this easy and effective tool, we are making sure our Y families have access to impactful information when they need it.

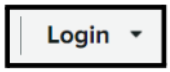
How often am I expected to post?

Each site is expected to submit a **minimum of 2 posts per month**. Please keep in mind that posting the same content on 2 platforms (Facebook and Instagram for example) counts as 1 single post. You will need to create posts with different content to fill this 2-post monthly expectation.

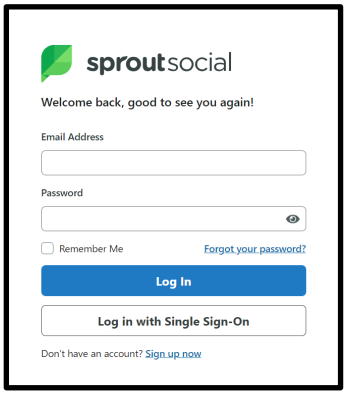
Logging In to Sprout

Log In

a. Go to https://sproutsocial.com/

b. Click Login ----------> 

c. Sprout Social ----------> 

d. Enter your login information ----------> 

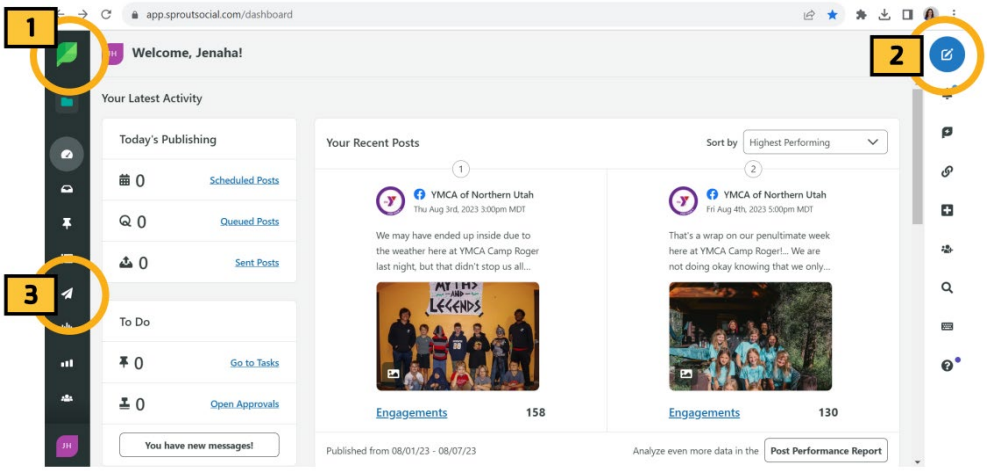
Login Email Address: ymca@ymcautah.org

Password:

e. Click Log In ——----------->

Important Buttons

Sprout Social has a ton of capabilities but you will only need to know a few. We will introduce you to all applicable features.



1		**Home Button** - If you get lost or click into an unfamiliar window, click the green leaf icon to return you to the home screen.
2		**Compose Button** - Start a post from scratch by clicking the compose icon located in the top right corner of the Sprout page
3		**Publishing Button** - Get access to the Publishing Calendar (to compose directly into the day you want the post to be published) by clicking the Paper Airplane icon on the left side of the Sprout page.

How to compose a new post

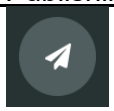
There are 2 easy ways to open a new compose window:

Through the Compose Button

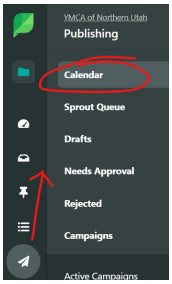
The compose button is located on the upper right corner of the Sprout tab

Click the compose button to lead you into the Compose screen

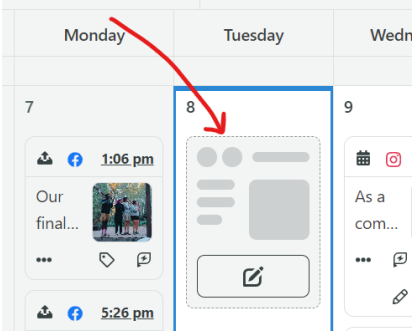
Through the Publishing Calendar



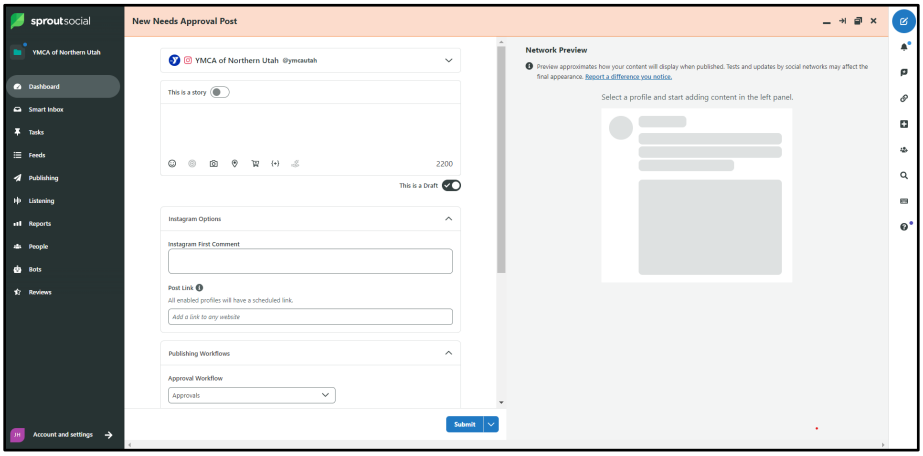
- Locate the Publishing Calendar by clicking the paper airplane icon on the left side of the window.
- The Publishing menu will appear just to the right side of the icon.
  - Click calendar to access the publishing calendar



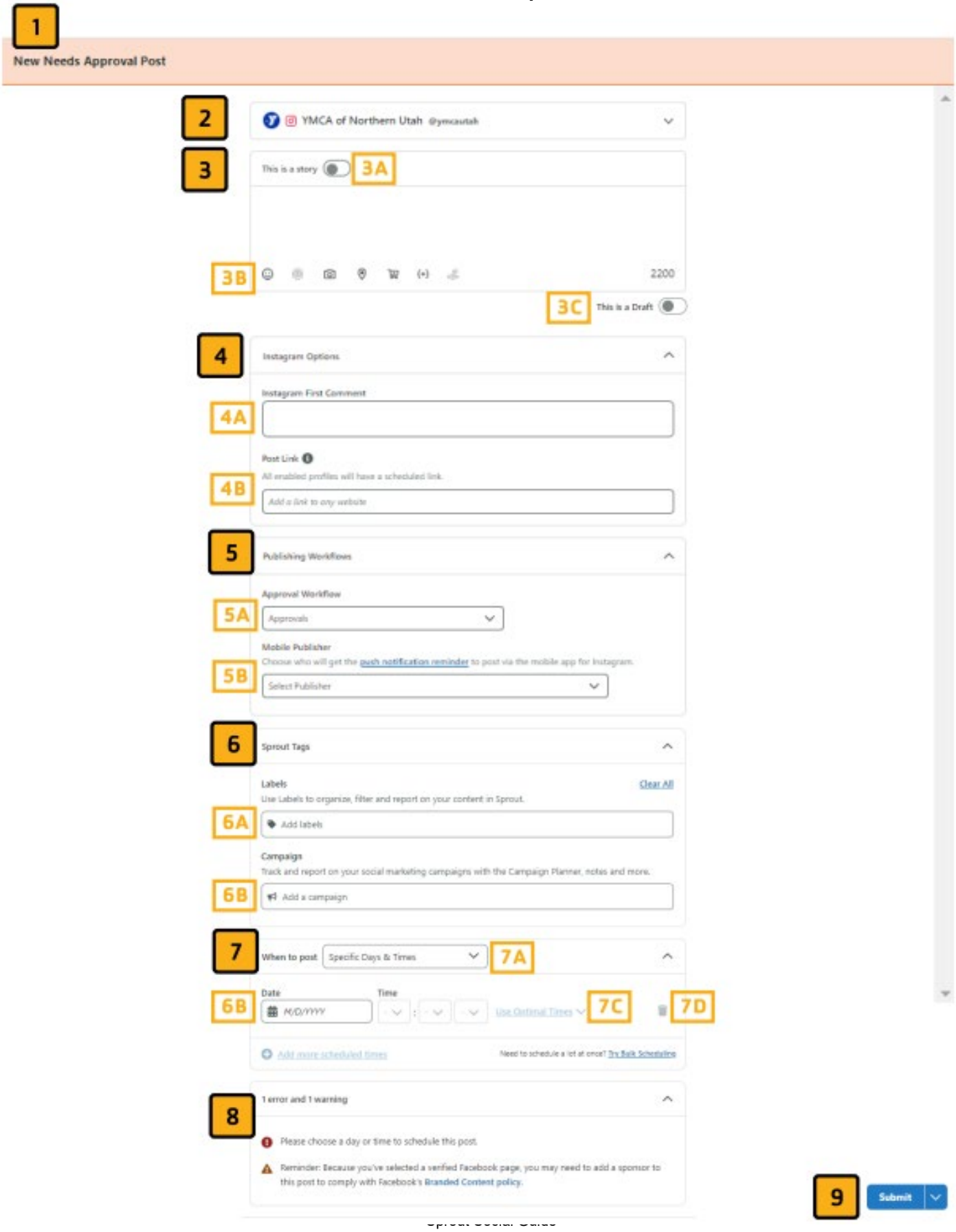
  - Hover over the calendar day you wish to publish and click the Compose icon



A new compose window will open

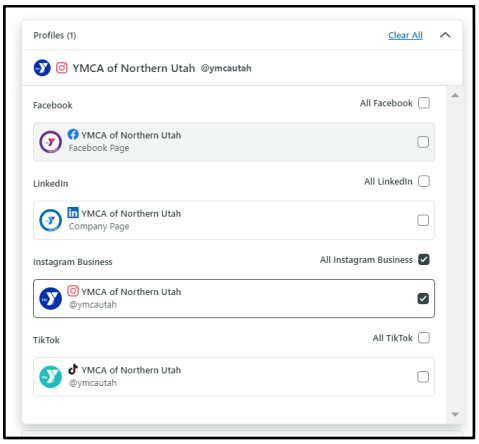


Elements of the Compose window



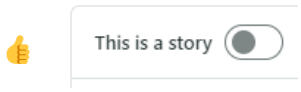
1. ***New Needs Approval Post* banner -** This banner indicates that a post is submitted it will be reviewed, edited (if necessary) and approved prior to publishing on our social media platforms.

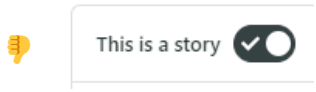
2. **Social Media Channel Selection drop down menu -** This menu will always say *YMCA of Northern Utah* and will give the option to select the social media platform/s to which your post will publish.



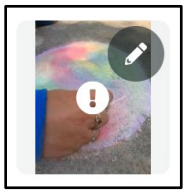
3. **Content Section -** This is where you will enter the content (Photo/Video, Caption, Hashtags).

   a. *This is a story* toggle button - DO NOT CLICK the *This is a story* toggle. This will change the post format from a regular post to a temporary story. You want the toggle dot to be gray and sitting to the left on a white fill. If the toggle dot is white, to the right of a check mark and on a black fill, simply click it again to deselect.





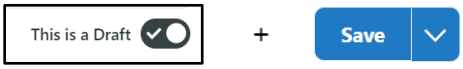
   b. Content box - Add your Photo/Video and Caption here.
      i. Photo/Video - Photos and videos can be added by dragging straight from a computer desktop folder OR by selecting the camera *Upload Media* button.
      Note:
      - a preview of the post will appear on the right and attached images will also appear in an Attached Images box below the Content Box allowing you to edit, delete, or add more photos.
      - If photos do not meet the ratio requirements for the platform, an exclamation point icon will appear indicating that there is an error with the Photo.
        - Scroll to *Errors* section at the bottom of the compose window for error details and how to fix it.
        - Scroll back to the



      ii. Caption - Type in your caption
          1. Text - Add context to photo/video/s
          2. Hashtags - Add 1-3 hashtags to help searchers find the post.
          You may add more if you choose but please ensure each hashtag supports the program and/or content of the post.
          NOTE: Hashtags will sometimes automatically populate in the *Labels* box in the *Sprout Tags* section.

3. Emojis (Optional) - You can choose to add up to 3 emojis.
    a. Emojis can be a great way of enhancing a post so if you decide to include any, please ensure they support the content and/or mood of the post.
4. Add a Link to your post (optional) - You may include a link for your audience to click and view a website where you sourced information that supports your post.
    a. Copy and paste URL into the content box
    b. Click the *Shorten Links* button

c. *This is a Draft* toggle button -
    i. If you are not finished with a post and need to finish it later, click the *This is a Draft* toggle button.
    ii. Click the *Save* button to save your draft



    iii. Return to your draft
        1. Click the *Publishing* button
        2. Click *Drafts* from the *Publishing* menu
        3. All drafts will appear in the right-hand feed. Scroll to find your draft, then click the *Edit* button (pencil icon) on your draft. This will take you back into the *Compose* window.
        4. Once in the Compose window deselect the *This is a Draft* toggle button to resume composing your post for submission.

NOTE: You will be unable to save a draft if you have entered a publish date and/or time. Clear the Publishing date and time by clicking the *Delete* button (trash can 🗑). You will then be able totogle the *This is a Draft* button.

NOTE: the *When to Post* section will NOT be visible/available if the *This is a Draft* button is toggled. In order to input a date and time for publication you must deselect the *This is a Draft* toggle button.

4. *Instagram Options* Section

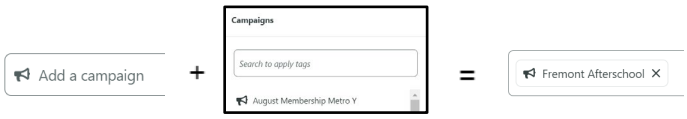
a. *Instagram First Comment* box - SKIP- we will not use this box
b. *Post Link* box (Discretionary) - This should only be used when further action by post viewers is required (ie. to register for a specific program or event) and should only link to an official YMCA pages: Y USA, YMCA of Northern Utah, or the webpage for your program and/or site.
    i. To add a link: copy the URL from your browser
    ii. Paste link into the *Post Link* box.

5. ***Publishing Workflows* Section**
    a. *Approval Workflow* box - This box should say “Approvals,” if not please select *Approvals* from the drop-down menu. 

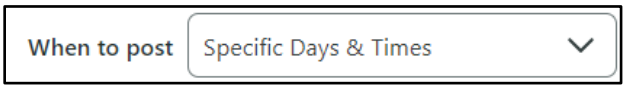
    b. Mobile Publisher box - SKIP

6. ***Sprout Tags* Section**
    a. *Labels* box - SKIP - hashtags may automatically populate into this box, but no further action or additions are required.
    b. *Campaign* box - Select your site/program Campaign
        i. Click *Add a campaign* - a *Campaigns* search menu will appear
        ii. Search/select your site/program name from *Campaigns* menu. Once selected your site will appear in the original Campaign box with an X next to it. If you accidentally select an incorrect site, click the X to remove it.

    NOTE: A campaign has already been created for each site/program, please DO NOT create a new campaign. If you do not find your site/program campaign listed please contact Marketing for help/clarification.

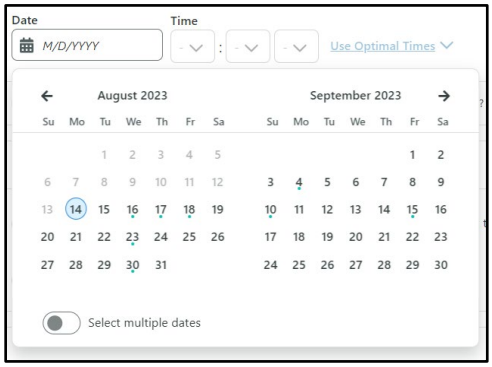


7. ***When to Post* Section -** This is where you will schedule all posts for publication
    a. Type of Scheduling drop-down menu - This menu should always say *Specific Days & Times.*



    b. Date - Click into the *Date* box and select the intended date of publication by clicking that date.

    NOTE: You must **schedule a post a minimum of 3 days ahead of the publication date.** This ensures enough time for posts to be approved before they expire. IF a post expires, it will no longer appear in the approval queue and will not publish.



    NOTE: Skip the *Select multiple dates* toggle button unless it is necessary to schedule this same post to publish on more than one day.

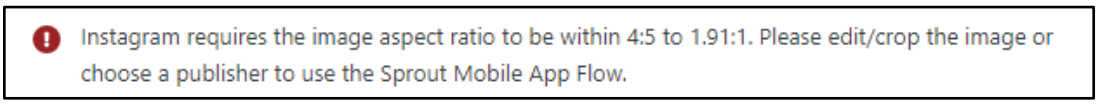
    c. Time of publication - to select the time the post will reach the most people, always click the *Use Optimal Time* drop-down menu.

i. Click *Use Optimal Times*
ii. Select the time with the most stars ---------->

d. If you wish to clear your post, or if you need to save it as a draft, clear the date time by clicking the *Delete* button.  and

8. ***Errors and Warnings* Section -** If there are errors that will prevent your post from publishing properly, they will show up in the Errors and warnings section. Address those that you are able to address. If you are unsure how to correct or address any error/warning message, please see your supervisor or ask Marketing for assistance.

   Example warning:

9. **Submit** - Once you have reviewed your post, select the submit button 

Elements to include in every Post

1. Photo(s) and/or Video ---------->
2. A caption ---------->
3. Hashtags (1-2) ---------->
4. Emoji's (Optional)

Photo/Video

Photos/Video should:

- Highlight a specific activity, person or person who looks engaged and happy/optimistic

Maximize impactful photos with:

- Bright/saturated color
- Cropped photos to get close up on faces and/or artwork so details are visible

Photos should NOT:

- Be repetitive. Do not include multiple angles of the same photo (keep photos diverse and include as many new faces as possible)
- Show kids with bruising, or feature kids looking bored, unhappy, or upset
- Depict an activity that could be interpreted as dangerous (example: A kid standing on a chair)

NOTE: Y USA branding standards do not allow the use of Stock or AI generated graphics, images, filters, or frames unless it has been approved, purchased, and licensed prior to use.

Captions

Captions need to include:

- Names - of site/program, of any visiting guests/volunteers/organization that are leading an activity or featured in the post
- Context - tell viewers what they are seeing. Use active, non repetitive language. Be sure to include how it supports learning/growth/etc, and how it fits into your curriculum and/or our Y values
- Present-tense/1st person voice: Use we, our, us when describing activities/games/etc.

Example:

👍 "A heartfelt thank you to all of our Taylorsville YMCA parents who joined us for Family Night! Your active participation in crafting special memories with us made the evening truly magical"

👎 "The kids had so much fun last week while they explored the winter wonderland. It was great to see them make so many snow shapes. They are so creative!"

Hashtags

Hashtags (#) are like signposts in the wilderness, they allow people searching social media to find us and understand the services we provide.

- Include around 3-5 hashtags per post.
- All hashtags should be cohesive with BOTH the photo and caption of the post and at least 1 hashtag should include YMCA.

Hashtags dos:

- Program type - #Afterschool #PreSchool #YMCAafterschool
- Be specific with Activity/lessons/themes - #readingtime #STEM #weloveSTEM

Hashtags Don’ts:

- Don’t use Random/trendy/disconnected/vague hashtags (again, unless the post is specifically about the word/concept) - #love #kids #viral

Emoji’s

Emoji’s are a great way to add visual interest to captions but, like hashtags, must directly relate to the photo and caption of every post. Do not use more than 5 per post.

Additional Resources

Sprout Create-a-Post Checklist

- ✓ Open a new Compose window
- ✓ Select **BOTH Facebook and Instagram** platforms
- ✓ Fill in content
    - Photo/Video
    - Caption
    - Hashtags (1-5)
    - Emoji's (optional)
- ✓ Add your **Program Site into the Campaign box**
- ✓ **Select** 

, and choose a future date from the calendar to publish (avoid same-day posts)
- ✓ Select the *Optimal Time* with the most stars from the list
- ✓ Review your post - Including **addressing any errors** that may show up in the *Errors and Warnings* section

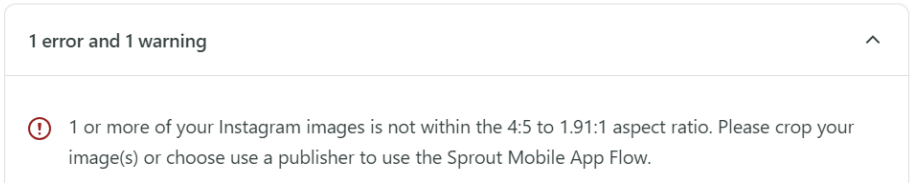
Links for download:

Sprout Create-a-Post Checklist

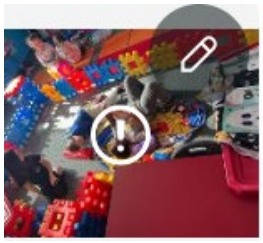
Sprout Social Quick Guide

FAQs

Q: I am seeing an error message about Instagram aspect ratios and/or an exclamation point icon over my photos. How do I fix this?



OR



Watch this Video: [How to Fix ASPECT RATIO Errors (and crop photos) Sprout]

Q: Why can't I find the posts I've scheduled, they seem to have disappeared?

Reasons a post may seem to "disappear" or did get published:

- **Post has been moved to a different publication date.** I will often look at content and move posts around so they have optimum visibility/impact, as well as ensure our content as a whole is more evenly distributed. If you do not see it on the calendar date you submitted it for, this is most likely the reason why.
- **Post has expired**. It has always been requested that posts be scheduled a minimum of three days out (example: if you post in sprout today 1/30, the earliest scheduled date you should pick would be Friday the 2nd). This is because posts expire if I am unable to approve them prior to the date/time they were scheduled for publication. Once they have expired, posts no longer show up as "waiting for approval" and do not get published.
- **There is no campaign (Site name tagged) in the Sprout Tags section.** If this box is left blank and the post is published then there is no way for me to know which site is responsible for the posting. I do my best to add those campaigns in, but with 24 sites submitting multiple posts regularly (in addition to the several campaigns for other programs I have running each week), I don't always catch them. This is why it is so important that each person double check that all the correct information is accounted for in every post prior to submitting.
- **Post has not been submitted for approval.** I have noticed that there are always a few draft posts floating around on the Sprout publication calendar. I operate under the assumption that when the post is ready for me to see it, it will be submitted for approval. Additionally, I don't have the luxury of time to go through and follow up with these drafts. If a draft is not submitted for approval, it will not automatically publish.

Q: Where can I find my drafts in Sprout?

Drafts can be found through the publishing icon (paper airplane), in the menu under drafts. All saved draft posts will appear to the right of the menu on the main screen.