Call for Creatives: United Nations Opens Submission Process for COVID-19 Messaging Work

By Tiffany Ferris | April 1, 2020

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The United Nations has issued a "Global Call to Creatives" (the "Call") asking content creators, influencers, advertisers, and others to help in translating public health messages "into work that will engage and inform people across different cultures, languages, communities and platforms." The Call aims to create a shortlist of work that will be available on a microsite and accessible to users around the world who can download and use the work to spread key messages about COVID-19.

Those who want to answer the Call should create content that captures one of the UN's 6 key messages: (1) personal hygiene; (2) physical distancing; (3) "know the symptoms;" (4) kindness contagion; (5) myth busting; and (6) do more, donate. Work will be reviewed by the UN, and at least ten selected works will be made available, royalty free, for anyone who would like to use them.

The Call includes several "Dos" and "Don'ts" from the UN—DON'T use the UN or WHO logos, DON'T include images of people who are or look like they are under 18, DON'T use images of someone without consent, DO include messaging derived from UN-guidance.

While the Call's Dos and Don'ts are a good starting point, creators should keep other good practices in mind as well, especially with respect to potential claims that may arise from third-parties. While there may be a temptation to believe that creators answering the Call would not be the target of an enforcement action, that unfortunately does not seem likely. In fact, since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, over 100 copyright infringement lawsuits have been filed in the United States alone, with a leading filer making a statement that it remains committed to enforcing creators' rights as opportunities to earn a living are foreclosed by social distancing.[1] Creators answering the Call should:

- Be mindful of third-parties' intellectual property rights. Unless it is properly licensed, avoid using content created by others, including photographs, music, movie clips, artwork, and other creative works.
- Not create the mistaken impression that your work or a particular message is supported or endorsed by another entity or individual.
- Remember that celebrities and other public figures have a property right in, and can exercise control over, their identities. Avoid using the names, images, or personas of public figures without their permission.

The Call is set to remain open for submissions until April 9, 2020 at 6:00 PM, London time. Creators will be selected by April 22, 2020 at 6:00 PM, London time. More details are available at the Call brief on Talenthouse.

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[1] https://www.law360.com/articles/1257593/during-pandemic-prolific-copyright-lawyer-keeps-suing.

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