



# Succeed with Social Media

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## Social Media: Facebook

If your business isn't on Facebook yet, you're missing out on a valuable tool—there are over a billion active users each month. Business Facebook pages have become so popular that you're likely to see companies advertise their Facebook pages rather than their websites on TV commercials.

As with any social media venture, you shouldn't jump into Facebook without a clear plan. This article offers tips and strategies to make the most of Facebook's functionality and potential for your business.

### Identify Your Objectives

At this point you have likely identified overall goals for your social media initiative. However, each social media site may be conducive to different objectives. Think about specific goals for Facebook. Do you want to drive people to your website? Are you trying to connect with your client base? Are you trying to influence your brand's reputation? How you develop your page and execute your strategy should pertain to your specific goals.

### Create Your Page

To create a company profile, you must first create a Facebook account, if you don't already have one. Once your account is set up, create your company Facebook page here: [www.facebook.com/pages/create](http://www.facebook.com/pages/create).

A Facebook page is different than a personal profile or a group. Pages will appear in Facebook's search results, and users can also display pages they like in the "Like" sections on their personal profiles. If users "like" your page, then your status updates will display on their home page, called a "news feed," along with displaying on the home pages of their other Facebook friends.

When setting up your page, consider the following suggestions:

- Use a professional title that reflects your company name—you can't change it later.
- After you have 25 fans—or people who like your page—you can create a username and personalized URL to easily direct people to your page.

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**There were nearly 1.4 billion monthly active users on Facebook in 2015.**

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- Be sure to customize your page. Add an image, details about your business, company history, contact information, etc.
  - Select and crop your main image carefully so that it displays well as your thumbnail image on your page.
  - Choose a cover photo. Be creative with this space, but be sure to follow Facebook guidelines, found here: [www.facebook.com/help/276329115767498](http://www.facebook.com/help/276329115767498).
  - You also have the ability to further customize your page, integrate with your website and more—find more details at <https://developers.facebook.com/docs/>.
- Decide who will be in charge of running your company's page. You can create more than one page administrator if you have a multiple employees or a team that will be overseeing the page.

### Tips and Techniques

To improve your company's Facebook page, consider the strategies below:

- Facebook allows you to import an email list and invite those contacts to become fans of your page.
- Add links to your Facebook page in your email signature, add like buttons to your website, etc. to spread the word about your page.
- Give exclusive deals to your Facebook fans in order to bring extra value to your Facebook relationships (e.g., coupons, shipping discounts or contests).
- Engage with Facebook fans; don't just share information. Post interesting updates, ask questions, and give people a reason to interact with your company.
  - In your page settings, you have the option to allow fans to post directly on your "wall"—this can be a great strategy to get fans more engaged, but it takes more hands-on moderation. It is important that you monitor your wall regularly and respond to questions or comments in a timely manner so people know that someone is actively participating on behalf of the company.
  - When others post on your wall or respond to you, comment on their posts to build relationships and encourage their interactions.
  - Post photos or videos of your products, services, employees or company—and encourage fans to do the same.
  - Ask engaging questions to get people talking, even if they're not directly related to your business. For example, if you're a mechanic, try asking people about their favorite road trips or the lowest price they can remember paying for gas.
  - An easy way to encourage a response is simply to ask fans to "like" a statement if they agree with it. If you choose an interesting statement that people connect with, you'll increase your probability of getting more "likes."
  - Ask for company or product reviews from your fans, and display them. If you get a negative review, reach out to the customer and try to remedy the problem or repair the relationship.

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**Give exclusive deals to your Facebook fans, to bring extra value to your relationship and encourage them to keep visiting your page.**

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- Promote relevant events that you are hosting or attending, such as conferences, volunteer events, or other community or industry functions. This can show how active your company is in the community or industry.
- You have the ability to post milestones on your page, even ones that happened in the past. Use this feature to highlight big company events or news.
- To highlight a post on your page, click the star icon on the post (this will expand the post to widescreen).
- If your audience includes specific segments, you can create groups to target your messages. For instance, if you sell multiple products, you could create groups of customers for each one, and target messages specific to each audience. This is particularly strategic because Facebook users are often overwhelmed with images, status updates and distractions—so anything not relevant may be ignored.
- Post subscription information for your newsletters on your page, and occasionally post teaser content to encourage your fans to subscribe.
- If you want to display a post at the top of your timeline, you can “pin” it there for seven days. Click on the pencil icon and select “Pin to Top.”
- Use Facebook to integrate with other social media channels. For instance, if a client asks a question on Twitter, you can repeat it (with the answer) on Facebook to reach more people. If it makes sense, you could also create a detailed response in a blog post and link to the blog on both Twitter and Facebook.
- People will inevitably reach out to you with issues, questions or concerns. Always respond, even if it just means referring them to the right person. Or, contact the person in your company who will have the information and let the customer know the resolution.
- Monitor your success by using Facebook’s analytic feature called Facebook Insights, which allows page administrators to gauge how the page is performing. Use this information to identify areas for improvement in your social media efforts.

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**Any posts not highly relevant to a Facebook user will be ignored.**

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### Common Mishaps

Avoid making these common Facebook mistakes:

- Don’t post too often. Although it’s good to have exposure, over-posting is one of the top reasons people will “unlike” you. Along the same lines, don’t sync your account with Twitter. Posting multiple times each day to Twitter is expected, but your Facebook fans will just get annoyed if they see all your linked tweets.
- Don’t use a third-party tool to schedule Facebook updates—Facebook penalizes you with how your updates are displayed (users will only see the most recent one of all the updates posted from the outside platform).
- Be sure to vary your content so readers don’t get bored with the same thing.
- Avoid using too much text. Facebook research shows that posts with 250 characters or less get 60 percent more likes or comments than longer posts.
- Never delete fans’ wall posts! More likely than not, they’ll notice and call you out, drawing more negative attention. Instead, talk with unhappy customers to resolve their issues or at least make your best attempt.

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- As with other social media platforms, avoid selling your brand or product too much. Instead, many of your posts should be questions or relevant information or news from other industry experts.

### Facebook Advertising

Another beneficial way to use Facebook is to post ads. Facebook ads appear throughout the site, and you have several options when creating your ad, including your target audience and your call to action (what the ad will link to). Use these tips to help get you started using Facebook ads.

- Be sure to choose the right target audience. This may take some market research or some trial and error to determine your ideal audience.
- Test your ads! Try different targets (one sex versus both, for example) to see which performs best, and then use that information going forward. Try testing different variables so you can develop the best ad for your money.
- Decide what action you want the viewer to take: become a fan of your page, sign up for a newsletter or visit your site. Your ad can link to your page or external website, or can include a “like” button for fans to like your page without leaving the page they’re on.
- Make sure your ad stands out. You’re not only competing with other ads, but also with photos and updates from the user’s Facebook friends. Speak to your target audience and be direct to make sure you are noticed.

More information about Facebook ads can be found on [www.facebook.com/business.com](http://www.facebook.com/business.com).

### In Summary

Facebook can be an extremely valuable marketing tool for businesses of all sizes. By using the strategies above to create quality content that speaks to and engages your audience, you can build your brand and improve customer loyalty.