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Facebook Marketing: A Comprehensive Guide for Beginners

. As the largest social network in the world, it has more than 1.23 billion active users, 62% of whom log in on a daily basis.

With such a large user base, ignoring Facebook really isn't an option for most marketers. You can bet your ideal market is using Facebook nearly every day. The question is: how do you target all of those users with your marketing?

The good news is that the Facebook advertising platform allows you to zero in and specify the type of people you're looking for. You can target by location, demographics, and interests.

In this guide, We'll show you the basics of how to use Facebook to your advantage. The guide is aimed at the beginner who wants an introduction into marketing their business on the world's largest social network.

Who's On Facebook?

Facebook may have started out as a social network for college students, but, by now, nearly everyone with an internet connection is using it. The minimum age requirement is 13, and there is reason to believe it is being used by all other age groups.

Facebook doesn't publicly release data on their most popular age group, but a survey by Pew showed that social networking is most popular with the 18-29 age group. Its popularity decreases with age. It is least popular with those 65 and older.

We can assure you that, no matter what age group you're targeting, there will be more than enough of those users on Facebook.

How Can You Market on Facebook?

Facebook has three tools (pages, ads, and groups) that can be used by anyone. Each of these options has its own purpose, and they can be combined for greater reach.

Pages

Facebook pages are similar to profiles, but for businesses, organisations, and public figures. Users can "Like" a page, which means they'll automatically receive updates from that page in their news feed. Users also have the option to "Like" a page but not follow it. (Users also can follow some profiles.)

While profiles require a mutual relationship between friends, pages can be liked by anyone, without a requirement for the page creator to accept a fan. They also don't have a restriction on the number of friends/fans they can have (unlike profiles, which are limited to 5,000 friends).

Advantages: Pages are free and easy to set up.

Disadvantages: It can be hard to get a foothold and build a fan base with a page.

Ads

Facebook offers a fantastic targeted advertising platform. You can create ads targeted at specific geographic areas, ages, education levels, and even the types of devices used for browsing. Facebook also lets users close ads they don't like and "Like" a page right beneath an advertisement:



Advantages: Ads have powerful targeting parameters.

Disadvantages: Ads can get expensive, depending on your goals.

Groups

Facebook groups are similar to discussion forums, but with additional features that pages and profiles have (like a wall). You can create groups related to your industry or product offerings as a way to reach out to potential customers.

Advantages: Groups are free and have high levels of engagement.

Disadvantages: Groups can be very time consuming.

How to Market with Pages

Facebook pages are the simplest, easiest way to get started marketing with Facebook. They're free, relatively easy to set up (at least in their basic forms), and incredibly flexible. There's not much of a downside, either.

Unfortunately, many companies don't use them to their full potential; or worse, use them badly. These guidelines will help you avoid making those mistakes.

Profile Photo and Cover Image

Your profile photo should be your logo. Simple as that.

The cover image is a different story. It's really up to you to decide what to put here. Some use photos of employees, while others use fancy artwork and put their contact information in the cover image. Pick a photo that will enhance your page and draw the eye of your visitors.

"About" Section

The "About" section is prominently placed right below your company logo. This is your chance to tell anyone coming to your page what your business does.

Make sure you put good information here, telling people what you're company does, why you're different, and other interesting details. If you can, take the time to write it specifically for your Facebook audience. You can copy the text from the "About" page of your website or blog, if you're in a pinch. Be sure to fill in all of your data under "Basic Info."

Just remember to keep it friendly and informal. A casual tone usually works best on Facebook. Here are a few good examples:

HubSpot tells us what they do and gives a contact method:

Professional Services - Add A Category
The world's #1 inbound marketing software platform that helps companies attract visitors, convert leads, and delight customers. 1-888-HubSpot x 1

WP Engine shares what they do and the number of customers they have, which helps establish credibility:

Startup
WP Engine is the premiere managed WordPress hosting platform, offering the fastest, most reliable, secure hosting for tens of thousands of websites.

You also may want to put your hours of operation in the About section.

Tabs

Tabs are the little squares that sit to the right of your About section. Here are ESPN's tabs:



Facebook allows you to use up to 10 application tabs, known to Facebook admins as the “Favorites” section. Photos and Likes are required tabs. You may move the Likes tab wherever you wish, but Photos must remain as the first. Your top tabs are set to a limit of four.

Think about what the priorities are for your visitors. If you're a physical store, you may want to make a tab for location. If you host webinars, perhaps you could use the Events tab to let people sign up and join your webinars. Social media is about engagement, so the more (and the more closely) you get your fans to engage with you, the better marketer you will be.

Post Useful Information to Your Wall

What you post to your wall will show up in the news feeds of everyone who has “Liked” your page, just as it does when you post something to your personal profile.

So, make sure what you're posting is useful to your fans. Don't post endless updates about the same thing, and don't post too many updates, clogging the news feeds of your fans.

Here are some ideas for the kinds of things you might want to post to your wall:

- ▶ Links to articles related to your company or your industry
- ▶ Links to your blog posts
- ▶ Coupon codes for fans to save on your products
- ▶ New product announcements
- ▶ Links to online tools your fans might find useful

Again, make sure that your posts are useful. Also, don't post more than a few times each day unless there's a special event going on.

Ask Your Fans Questions

Getting your fans involved with your page is a great way to inspire loyalty.

Asking questions in your updates gets people involved, but on their own terms. What you ask depends largely on your product and your niche, but asking open-ended questions usually garners the best responses. Asking opinions on a new product idea or project can be a good way to convince your fans that your company cares about what they want. Getting more engagement on a post may also help you reach the top of the Facebook News Feed.

Don't Spam

Spam is one of the quickest ways to lose fans. If you do nothing but send out promotional blurbs about your company, without ever adding anything of value, then you're going to have a hard time getting and keeping fans.

Before you send out any update, ask yourself if it honestly adds value to the conversation. If not, don't send it.

Study Your Statistics and Results

Facebook offers some really great analytics for pages. Pay attention to them. If you see a big surge in fans (or a drop off), look at what you've posted recently and see if you can figure out a reason for the trend. Then, post more of that kind of content (or less, if you're losing fans).

Targeted Advertising

Because it gathers so much demographic information about its users, Facebook has one of the best targeted advertising programs online. You can target users based on virtually anything you might find in their profiles, as well as track your success with each segment.

Ads can be run on a per-impression or per-click basis. Facebook shows you what bids are for ads similar to yours, so you know if your bid is in line with others in your industry. You also can set daily limits so there's no risk of blowing your budget.

Types of Facebook Ads

There are a number of ad subtypes you can choose from.

You can create ads that direct to your Facebook page, or to a site not on Facebook. You can create ads to promote a Facebook event, complete with an RSVP link. You can create ads for mobile app installs and app engagement.

Users Can Hide Your Ad

Facebook used to offer the option to "Like" any advertisement on Facebook. Not anymore. People can "Like" an advertisement (if it's that type) or hide the ad. Upon closing an ad, Facebook asks the user to specify why they didn't like it.

It's valuable information, providing insight into why your ads might not be doing very well.

Powerful Targeting Options

As already mentioned, Facebook has some of the most powerful targeting tools of any online advertising program.

You can target by virtually anything on a user's profile. You might start with the location, if that's important. You can specify either city, post code or county. This works particularly well for local businesses. From there, you can choose basic demographics, including relationship status, age, workplace, education (including major and years of attendance), birthday, and much more.

You can target ads to people who have recently moved. So, if you own a gym in Cork and want to find all the individuals who recently moved to the area, you can target your ads and ad copy to those individuals.

You also can target people based on their interests. Say, for example, you have a product that's targeted at baseball fans. You could enter baseball in the Interests field.

Or, maybe you've written a book and you're sure that people who like another certain book will like yours. Enter the book's title under Interests, and you'll specifically target those users.

You even can target a private list of users. If you have a list of email addresses of people that you want to target, you can use Facebook's ads manager to target just those people. So, if you run a business and have 200 people on your "prospect list," you can use their email addresses to target them with ads in Facebook.

Customise Your Ads

The other big advantage to tightly targeted ads is that you can create different ads for different demographic groups. Better targeted ads are going to garner better results.

If you're targeting football fans, you might create individual ads for different popular teams. You could have one ad specifically aimed at Chelsea fans, one at Man Utd fans, and another at Arsenal fans, and then have those ads shown only to people who have indicated in their Interests that they are fans of those teams.

Or, let's say you've targeted people based on their love of a particular book. You could mention that book in the ad itself to make it more likely to catch their attention. Create different ads for different books, and then target accordingly.

Conclusion

Facebook isn't just powerful. It's flexible. No matter what type of company you run, it has enough different marketing options that you can tailor your marketing efforts to fit your company, your budget, and your time constraints.

Yes, it can take some time to get to know all of its features, but it's worth it. Facebook still is growing at a rapid pace, and every day it becomes a more indispensable part of social media marketing.

It's also important to strike while the iron is hot. For the moment, companies that are savvy about Facebook marketing still enjoy an early-adopter advantage. Once more traditional marketers start transitioning into the space, competition will increase, advertising prices will rise, and users will become much pickier.

If Facebook is not a current part of your marketing campaign, it should be. Set aside some time to tinker around, start a few test campaigns, and see what happens. Like anything, it takes practice to get good at it.