

Month 2: Establish Corporate Presence with Pages and Groups

Facebook fan pages and groups have evolved from humble beginnings to become effective ways to communicate with consumers. Both were set up by Facebook originally to respond to MySpace, which rose to popularity by being a place for musicians, bands, and comedians to announce tour stops and news. Today, Facebook fan pages and groups are the preferred approach for many marketers to establish a corporate presence on Facebook and ultimately keep consumers informed.

5

Chapter Contents

Week 1: Learn About Pages and Groups

Week 2: Determine and Execute Content
Strategy

Week 3: Add and Experiment with Content

Week 4: Monitor and Modify the Plan

Week 1: Learn About Pages and Groups

Pages and groups have always been Facebook’s preferred destinations for business, while Facebook has steered individuals toward profiles. When both were first released, the differences between pages and groups were fairly significant, but there was a lot of ambiguity about which was the better option. Many companies on the leading edge of social network marketing had no choice but to create both a fan page and a group to see how consumers would react to both. As time has progressed, Facebook has evolved the page concept into something more akin to “profiles for business.” People who create Facebook pages for their business now have very similar functionality to what we outlined in Chapter 4, “Month 1: Creating the Plan and Getting Started,” for profiles. Groups, on the other hand, have evolved more into a tool for individual Facebook users to express themselves and to put users into groups for “closed” communications with a subset of friends. Today, most companies opt to create a Facebook fan page while monitoring the activity of groups. Nonetheless, both can be used for marketing purposes, and both can affect consumer perception of your brand, company, or campaign.

Monday: Observe a Successful Facebook Fan Page

The best way to learn the elements of an effective fan page presence for your organization is by observing the work of others. Very little is new or novel—and Facebook contains a wealth of examples of good fan pages that you can review to give you ideas of what would work in your specific situation and with your target customers.

One such example of a successful Facebook fan page is Raising Cane’s page, a popular chicken fingers restaurant headquartered in Plano, Texas. Check out its fan page in Figure 5.1.

You may notice that the first thing you see is the Wall for Raising Cane’s fan page. It contains official announcements from the company, images, links that have been posted, and comments from fans. Notice how many comments and positive interactions this particular company has with its customers! Raising Cane’s has posted something every day, and their customers are responding. In this particular case, the restaurant appears to closely manage posts on the Wall—customers are not writing things directly on their Wall. You may want to allow this in your particular situation.

Here are a few other things you should notice about this fan page:

- The company has been pretty successful for a regional fast food chain—it has more than 44,000 fans!
- There is an option for you to become a fan at the very top of the screen next to the name of the page.
- Raising Cane’s is aggressively using photos, with 18 albums (see Figure 5.2 for examples).

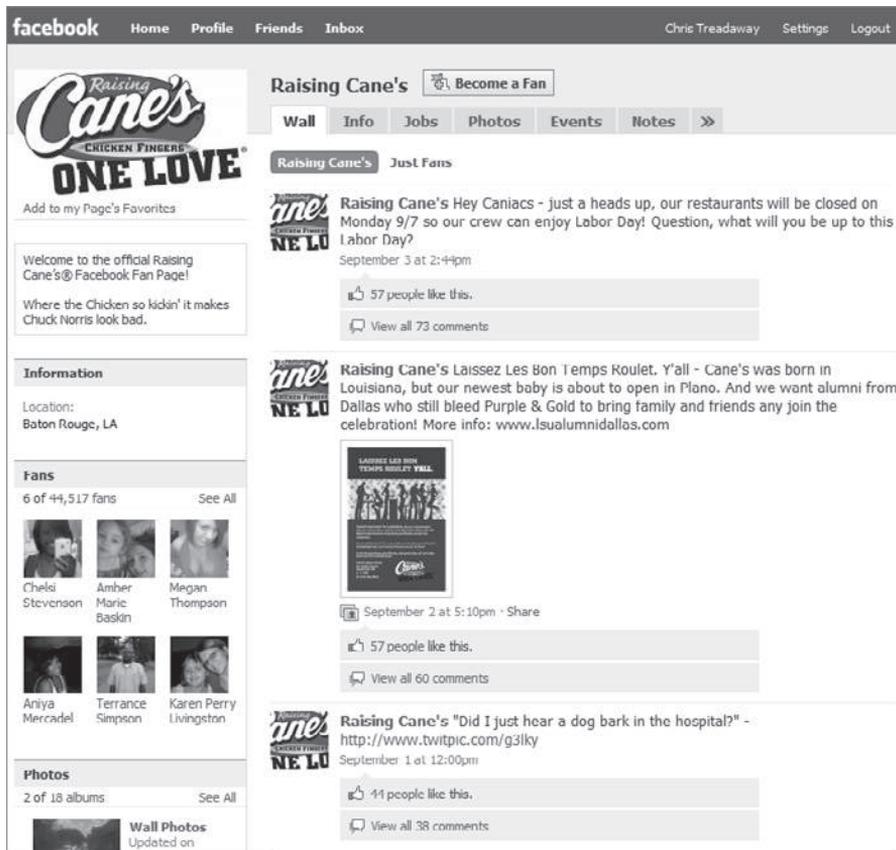


Figure 5.1 Raising Cane's fan page

Opening Pandora's Box

It's funny how something seemingly innocent like comments on your website or fan page can cut both ways. On one hand, it's a good way to get people talking about your product or service—and it can be a feature that helps drive traffic to you. On the other hand, if it isn't closely watched, it could turn nasty.

What are some things that you should consider when opening your site or fan page to user submissions and comments?

- Is your organization comfortable with the concept? Culturally, is your organization willing to deal with the good and the bad? Your organization may want to tightly control messaging or user feedback. If so, user comments and posts can be more damaging than an environment where broadcasting customer feedback isn't seen as a risk.

Continues

Opening Pandora's Box (Continued)

- Does your organization have experience with user-submitted content? If you are blogging aggressively or if you already have comments on another web property, others have probably faced difficulties and learned how to deal with problems.
- Will you really interact with customers, or will the feature give you a business benefit? Inherent in this process is the creation of a community of people who have a common interest—your product or your organization. If you can creatively use this as an outlet for calls to action or for better exposure, it may be a good option. If you're doing it just to "fit in" with the crowd, you're probably not motivated by the right things.
- Are you afraid of giving your customers a loudspeaker? Although this could be a great way to communicate with customers, it is also a great way for people to publicly air grievances. If your customers are more polite, it may work very well. But by doing this, you may be giving your customers a reason to get other people in the community upset at your organization.

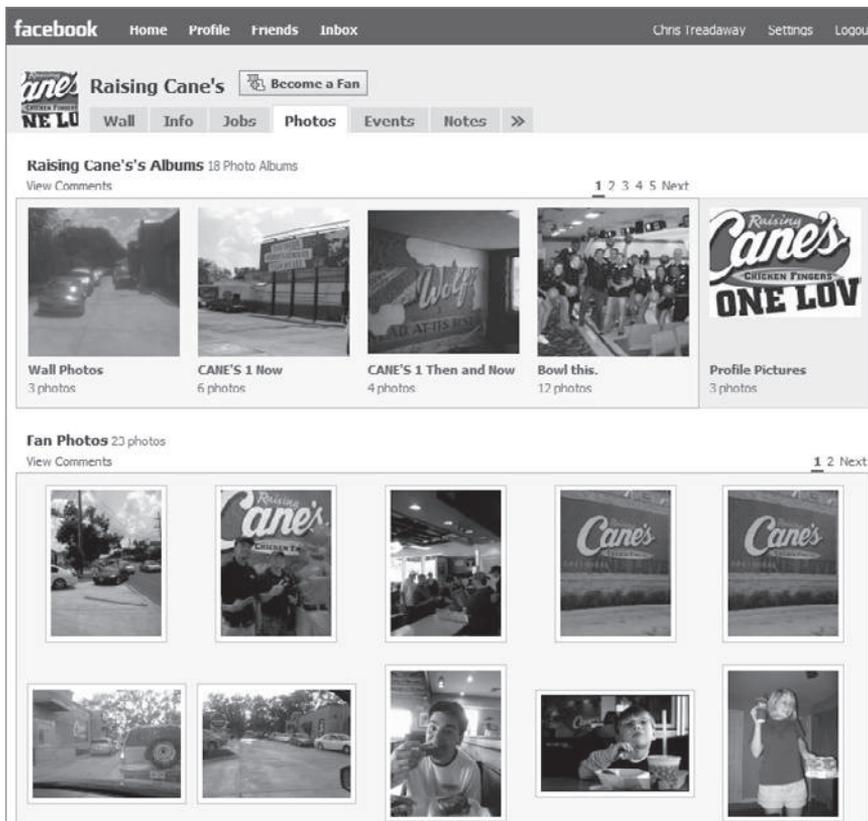


Figure 5.2 Raising Cane's Photos page

- Raising Cane’s regularly runs contests and playfully announces winners on their wall (see Figure 5.3).
- The company is also using Facebook to help its human resources department find employees (an app powered by Monster.com; see Figure 5.4).



Figure 5.3 Raising Cane’s Contests

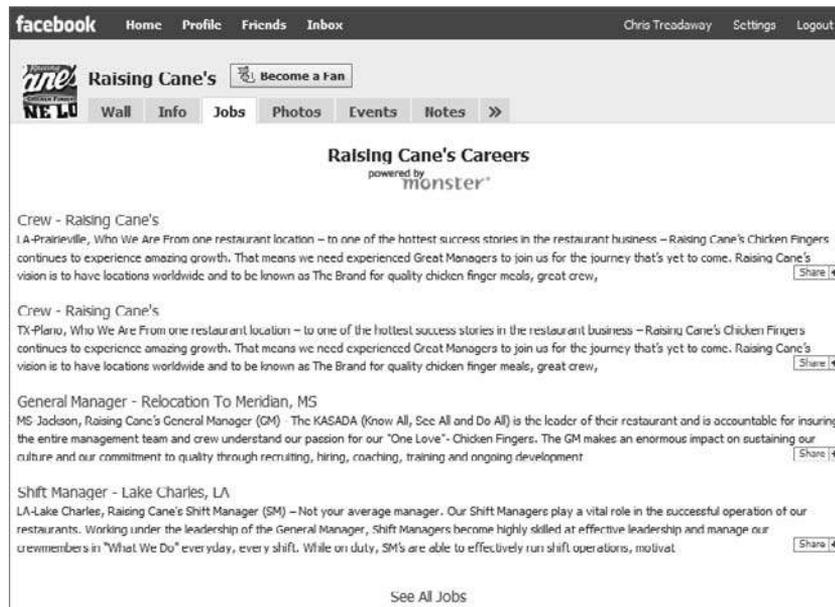


Figure 5.4 Raising Cane’s Jobs page

We like the Raising Cane’s example because it’s pushing the limits of Facebook to help its business in a number of ways. Through the use of the Wall, the company is able to communicate with customers on a regular daily cadence. Therefore, a large number of their fans are getting a daily reminder of Raising Cane’s that conveniently appears in the fans’ News Feed. More important, this “community of fans” is helping to sell the Cane’s concept by commenting and liking various Wall posts. All of it helps in a subtle, almost subconscious way. Presumably, the daily reminder plays a role where people choose to eat when they are hungry and can’t come up with a better idea.

But over and above the daily Wall post, the restaurant is using photos, events, and other types of content to reinforce the restaurant and the brand with fun and energy. These things can help turn ordinary people who enjoy an occasional chicken finger basket into supporters who recommend the restaurant to friends and family. Alongside the marketing benefits of daily fan page maintenance, they're sourcing their network of Facebook fans for employees. This helps in a few ways:

- It helps inform passionate fans of the restaurant of available positions, which in turn helps the company source passionate employees.
- It reduces the cost of talent acquisition (if Canes' are indeed able to find qualified candidates).
- It is a simple yet meaningful way to show fans available job opportunities with the company.

One more important point regards Raising Cane's presence on Facebook: conducting a search yields a large number of fan page and group results. Many of the fan pages are clearly created by the company for specific restaurant locations, but there are a few which appear to have been created by fans. Certainly the large number of Raising Cane's groups are mostly user created. In order to clearly distinguish the official Facebook fan page for Raising Cane's, the company included this line in the small info section below their fan page image: "Welcome to the official Raising Cane's Facebook Fan Page!" (Figure 5.1.)

Tuesday: Become a Fan of Successful Fan Pages

So, let's start by reviewing an effective Facebook fan page. Log into Facebook, pick a brand or a company you really like, and enter it in the search box in the upper-right part of the screen. In the search results, click Pages, and click the fan page you'd like to see. Pages with a higher number of fans obviously are doing something better than those with fewer fans, so you should opt for those that have been more successful as you seek examples. (Alternatively, you may wish to browse the index of all Facebook fan pages in their respective categories. Here is the direct link to the directory, which is not easy to find on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/?browse>. Or, two other sources are at <http://www.facebakers.com> and <http://statistics.allfacebook.com/pages>).

Conceptually, what features or elements of a Facebook fan page will help your business? If building a good Facebook fan page is one part art and one part science, then how can you emulate success in your own situation? Here are a few ideas:

Interaction Does the fan page encourage people to interact with each other or comment on the things you post or share? What kinds of content seem to work best to encourage interaction?

Soft-selling How far does the fan page administrator go to directly sell products or services? Is the fan page used to influence fans in any way?

Creativity What elements of the fan page are a clever or more interesting extension of the brand that makes it more acceptable or more interesting to the target market?

Informing How is the fan page used to communicate business information to customers? Is it too frequent, or is it used appropriately?

As you investigate success stories, consider becoming a fan of a half dozen or so, and observe how they communicate with you over time. You're looking for your snap reaction when you get a communication from a fan page—are you annoyed or are you happy to hear from them? Little things like this can have a big impact on how your fan page will be received. And how will this differ by demographic group and for your particular situation? Remember, some demographic groups accept a more or less frequent amount of communication from popular brands. Observe and remember to empathize with your customer base. Don't impose your standards on the marketplace—misreading what would or would not be allowed could cost you.

Just as with a profile, Facebook posts activity to fans' News Feeds when changes are made to a fan page. So, you won't just be updated when a new item is posted on the Wall. Changes to the Info tab, new events, new photos, new discussion threads, and so on, will appear in fans' News Feeds. Be sure to also check your fan page Updates section (found via your e-mail Inbox on Facebook—though this may be moved at some point). Fan page admins have the ability to message all fans; however, because these messages go into a separate section of Facebook, fans have to find the updates of their own volition. Nonetheless, it's worthwhile keeping an eye on how other companies/brands use the fan updates. File all this knowledge away for the future when you begin to build your company's Facebook fan page.

Wednesday: Learn the Basics of Facebook Groups

If you were to track how people have used Facebook over time, you would probably find that Facebook groups have been on a steady decline as a marketing tool. Why is that? There are several possible contributing factors:

- All content on fan pages gets indexed by Google (including for live searches), whereas indexed content on groups is limited, if any.
- More activity gets pushed to fans' News Feeds from fan pages than from groups users are a member of.
- Fan pages allow the addition of apps that provide much customization potential—especially with the Static FBML app.
- Fan pages offer the potential for unlimited fans that admins can message en masse via updates. Group membership is also unlimited and there is an advantage insofar as admins can send messages that land right in the Inbox. However, once a group reaches 5,000 members, the ability to send e-mails is no longer available. Facebook has this measure in place for “technical reasons and to prevent spam.” (See: <http://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=14513>)

Fan pages have essentially evolved into company profiles, whereas groups are more for people who share a specific commonality beyond just liking a brand, company, or product. In terms of the psychology behind why Facebook users join Groups in the first place, more often than not it is simply a throwaway gesture to show support and declare something that person feels strongly about. Pages are open to the broad Facebook community, and groups are more subject to “membership” or specific qualifications that administrators require for members to participate.

There are three types of groups available:

- **Open (the default)** Anyone can view the group and content and anyone can join.
- **Closed** Invite-only, though anyone can view and read some content.
- **Secret** Invisible to everyone except members; these types of groups are not findable in a search. You have to be invited to even know it exists. Secret groups are ideal for family members. We’ve also heard of some companies using secret groups as their intranet (in-house internet).

Groups are an effective opportunity for companies that want to communicate exclusively with premium customers, sales targets, and so on. It’s best to think of groups as a means to exclude certain Facebook users rather than including all who show interest as you would with a Facebook fan page. If you have good reasons to exclude or qualify users, choose a group (possibly only if you intend for that group to remain below the 5,000 threshold for sending e-mails). If you want to reach as many people as possible, choose a Facebook fan page. In some situations, you may want to use both a group and a fan page to communicate differently with segments of your audience. For example, consider a hypothetical scenario where a company is promoting a popular consumer product. They may want as many “fans” on their fan page as they can get. But they may also want to invite specific “fanatics” to be part of an exclusive, members-only club—a small, rabid community of sorts—to foster information sharing, product announcements, and special events only open to a select few. This is where groups can be used with great effect.

Facebook groups are general destinations for people with like-minded interests to gather and become members of. Group members can write on the group’s Wall, exactly as you can on a profile page, as well as leave topics and posts on the discussion board.

According to Facebook, “The Groups page contains all the information about your groups on Facebook.” You can see groups your friends have joined, navigate to your own groups, and create new groups on the Groups page. Additionally, you can search and browse for groups to join from this page.

You can create a group by going to www.facebook.com/grouphome.php and clicking the Create A Group button in the upper-right corner of the page. Follow the instructions on the subsequent pages by adding descriptive information about your group and other information. All groups require a group name, description, and group type. When you are finished, click Create Group, and you’re done.

After you have added this information, you will then be able to control settings related to your group's privacy and add a group picture. You can change these settings at any time by clicking Edit Group on the group's main page.

Thursday: Decide Between a Fan Page or a Group

So, how do you decide whether you need a Facebook group or a fan page, or maybe even both? Although at first glance they appear to be similar to one another, fan pages and groups contain some key differences that you need to keep in mind when you are setting them up. In a nutshell, groups are easy to set up but have limited functionality. Pages provide a rich set of features that are not currently available on Facebook groups.

Fan pages allow the same type of interaction as groups but with many more options for customization and personalization. Like Facebook groups, a Facebook fan page has a Wall and can have a discussion board, but it can also have much more, such as Facebook applications, Flash, and HTML code. Because of the flexibility of using HTML code, fan pages can be customized to look similar to a website. Although fan pages often are pages devoted to a popular musician, sports star, actor/actress, or politician, they are quickly becoming much more than that, with pages for marketers, realtors, magazines, and writers, according to Facebook.

Facebook fan pages are for real entities to broadcast great information to fans in an official, public manner. Like profiles, they can be enhanced with applications that help the entity communicate with and engage their fans and that capture new audiences virally through their fans' recommendations to their friends.

A musical artist, business, or brand can create Facebook pages to share information, interact with their fans, and create a highly engaging presence plugged into Facebook's social graph. These pages are distinct presences, separate from users' profiles, and optimized for these presences' needs to communicate, distribute information/content, engage their fans, and capture new audiences virally through their fans' recommendations to their friends. Facebook pages are designed to be a media-rich, valuable presence solution for any artist, business, or brand that can be integrated seamlessly into the user experience with socially relevant applications.

Although the primary differences between pages and groups become evident only after you try them, let's look at what's been created to promote GeekBriefTV:

- GeekBriefTV group
- GeekBriefTV fan page

Why would GeekBriefTV create both a group and a fan page? Probably because of the differences between the two. Fan pages are visible to unregistered people and are indexed by search engines. This makes pages an important element for reputation management and search engine optimization campaigns. Additionally, pages allow for the inclusion of Facebook applications, give you the ability to create event listings, and give you access to user/visitor statistics. These features are not available in Facebook groups.

One advantage of Facebook groups is the feature that allows you to send out “bulk invites.” You can easily invite all your friends to join a group. Of course, since any group member can also send bulk invites to his/her friends, this can easily be abused, lending itself to potentially being used for sending spam.

With pages, if you wanted to invite your friends in the same way, you’d need to create Friend Lists first, which are limited to just 20 individuals. This can be an extremely time consuming process. We recommend other creative ways of letting your friends know about your fan page and getting them to join.

For a succinct chart of the differences between pages and groups, check out Figure 5.5:

Key Feature	Facebook Page	Facebook Group
“Ugly” URLs	No	Yes
Hosting a discussion	Yes	Yes
Discussion wall, and discussion forum	Yes	Yes
Extra applications added	Yes	No
Messaging to all members	Yes	Yes
Visitor statistics	Yes (“Page insights”)	No
Video and photo public exchange	Yes	Yes
“Related” event creation and invitation	Yes	No
Promotion with social ads	Yes (never tried it)	No

SEARCH ENGINE JOURNAL (www.searchenginejournal.com)

Figure 5.5 Difference between pages and groups

Although there are benefits and drawbacks for both pages and groups, it is up to you to decide which one suits your needs best. If you are looking for guidance, then we recommend the fan page for most situations. Based upon our experience, there is not really any compelling reason to choose a group over a page.

Celebrities, organizations, politicians, and corporate entities are using the Facebook fan page option in most cases today. Nevertheless, group pages remain popular in some cases, we believe, because they are easy to set up and they allow for quick conversation and interaction without the hassle of customization and creating the perfect fan page presence. In addition, often the perception of a group is that it is non-commercial; it’s mostly Facebook users that create groups. Whereas fan pages are specifically designed for businesses to build their presence so are inherently more commercial than groups.

Friday: Set Up Your Page or Group

Before we dive into specific instructions on setting up fan pages, it's important to note that Facebook forces users to connect all fan pages to a user's personal profile. Many businesses balk at this and have, in fact, run into challenges because of this enforcement. For example, say a member of staff creates the company fan page whilst logged into their own personal account. This means that person is the primary admin for the fan page, which is fine. But, if they do not assign any other staff members as an admin and leave the company at some point, the Fan Page could end up sitting out there in limbo with no one to administer it if the ex staff member can't be tracked down. This has unfortunately happened to many businesses. The key, therefore, is to give careful thought as to which staff member will be the (initial) primary admin for the company fan page. And then have that person immediately assign at least one additional staff member as an admin.

There is no way for Facebook users to discern who is the admin for a page. In fact, even if you set up a fan page in your own name, e.g., as in the case of a celebrity, speaker, author, etc., Facebook treats your personal profile and your fan page as two totally separate and unique entities. Admins have to become a fan of their own page.

The only other point to make about this aspect of connecting personal profiles to fan pages is the fact Facebook does offer what is called a "Business Profile." If an individual (or company) wanted to have a Facebook fan page but currently does *not* have a personal profile on Facebook, it is possible to create a fan page that is connected to this very limited Business Profile. It's not possible to view and experience a fraction of the features Facebook offers via these Business Profiles, so we don't recommend this approach. (See <http://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=12850>)

To create your Facebook fan page, first log in with the account you'd like to use to administer your company's presence. You can add more people later to help you administer the page. Once logged in, scroll to the very foot and click on the small link for "Advertising" or, navigate to the Applications button in the lower left of your screen and look for the link for "Ads and Pages." Click Ads And Pages on the Applications tab in the bottom left of the screen. This is the primary interface for both administering Facebook advertising and creating Facebook fan pages. (Facebook really want you to buy ads to promote your Fan Page!) Now, depending on whether you have previously purchased Facebook Ads, the interface will look slightly different. Look for the button that says "Pages" (it has the little orange flag fan page icon) at either the very top or on the top left. Click that link, then look for another button that says "+ Create Page" to create a new Facebook fan page. Alternatively, here is the direct URL to create a page (which you can find on the lower left of any Facebook fan page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php>)

Figure 5.6 shows the fan page setup process. There are a few interesting things to note here. First, local businesses have a variety of ways to profile themselves on Facebook—25 of them to be precise. So, fan pages are built to be compatible with small businesses that need to promote themselves via social media. Second, there is a further distinction between companies and notable people (artists, bands, famous people) in that both need to manage relationships with fans through a fan page instead of a profile. Finally, there is a loose “certification” process that asks the users to verify that they are authorized to establish the Facebook fan page for the business. If you are indeed that person, don’t stress out about signing here with a digital signature. The Facebook cops aren’t going to call around your office to verify that you are indeed the company representative. This is mainly a way for Facebook to deal with people who create a malicious fan page. Nothing can keep someone from claiming they are an official representative of your business, but they can be discouraged by the threat that Facebook will shut down their account if it is used to slander a business or a person.

Figure 5.6 Facebook fan page setup

One of your initial challenges will be simply deciding which Fan Page Category best suits your business. There are three primary categories to choose from: 1) Local, 2) Brand, Product, or Organization and 3) Artist, Band, or Public Figure. If you are a bricks and mortar business, we definitely recommend selecting Local, then drilling down to find the most suitable sub-category. The category we suggest most often is Brand, Product, or Organization, then the sub-category of “Professional Service.” The category you choose determines some of the fields that show up on your fan page. However, there are imminent changes (to the Info Tab and tabs in general), so the

choice of category may not be as important in the coming months and years. Certainly, fans do not seem to navigate their way through the directory of categories; rather they find you via the promotion both you and your existing fans are doing.

Now that you've set up your fan page, you'll probably notice that it is relatively empty. Facebook provides the structure for your fan page, but it isn't going to do the work of populating the page with content. That's your job. Generally speaking, in the early days it wasn't a problem to ask users and fans to be patient while you built the site. In fact, you can choose to keep your fan page unpublished until you've added some custom content, apps, etc. If you read Chapters 3 and 4, you should already know where you will source content, what you will post, and at what cadence. If not, you have some catching up to do! In the beginning, you want to focus on getting the basics right—it's much better to learn earlier than later when thousands of people can watch you fail!

The Edit Page link (which is located just under the image you are using for your fan page) provides some features that you'll want to explore. It is really more a collection of settings that govern the use of your fan page. On this screen, you can edit the following:

- Who can/can't become a fan (age, country, and so on)
- Whether or not fans can post directly to the Wall or make comments
- Content that can be shared with mobile phone users
- The default tab that is opened on your fan page when a user visits for the first time on a given day
- Settings for other applications that you run

Your decisions about these settings will determine quite a bit about the user experience for your fan page. They drive who you target, the level of interactivity you have, and the first thing that people see when they view your page. The Wall is the default view, but some companies instead opt to have a different experience altogether. Customized experiences can be created by adding a specialized application that runs on the Boxes tab. So if the Wall doesn't provide the right experience for your customers, you can create whatever view you want with a custom tab and make that the default for your fan page. One caveat—this will require custom code and design if you want it to have a professional look and feel.

Fan pages have similar functionality to profiles in a variety of ways. The Info tab exists for a fan page much like it does for a profile, but it has a more limited set of information geared to businesses. (Facebook will be rolling out changes to tabs in 2010, so you may find the Info tab changes over time.) Included in the list of options is a list of websites. This list is typically used to inform users of other websites, social media accounts, and so on. You can similarly share upcoming events through the Events tab, photos through the Photos tab, blog posts through the Notes tab, links through the Links tab, and videos through the Videos tab. Functionally, fan pages

are almost identical to in the features on Facebook profiles. In addition, discussions are available by default to encourage people to interact on your fan page. Third-party applications such as reviews, polls, and others can extend the fan page to include more functions of interest to your business. You'll need to try a few things and see what other page administrators are doing to make their Facebook presence more engaging. Most activities that are edited or shared by an administrator on the Facebook fan page will appear in fans' News Feeds. As you investigate new features and opportunities, test the outcomes with a Facebook profile so you can see how other fans will experience your page.

Now, the Boxes we mentioned are not to be confused with a relatively new Facebook feature called *fan boxes* (Figure 5.7). Fan boxes allow page administrators to publish a summary of the fan page to a widget that can run on websites outside Facebook. It's an ideal situation for companies that have a lot of web traffic to an official company home page, a blog, or a product page. You can show users of these sites that you have a Facebook fan page with the fan box. Why is this important? If you are active and have enough fans, it can communicate that you/your brand is modern, and it can communicate with customers on social media. It makes you more approachable and more personable. Now, on the other hand, it can be detrimental if it appears that you have abandoned your Facebook fan page or if you don't have any fans. So, be sure to add the fan box to your website only after your fan page has matured. This feature is all the more reason to make sure the Facebook fan page has a prominent role in your social media marketing campaign. Fan boxes and other "widgets" to help optimize your Facebook presence can be found at: <http://www.facebook.com/facebook-widgets>.

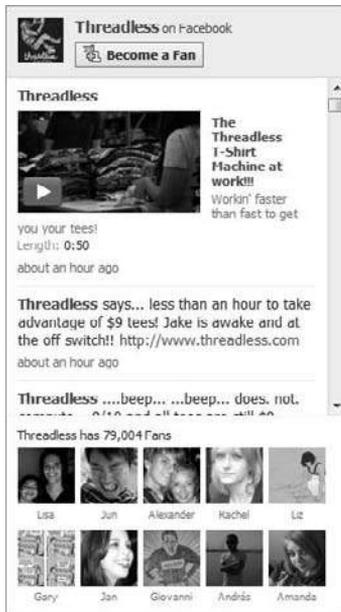


Figure 5.7 Facebook fan box example

Now turn your attention to Facebook groups. Similar to pages, you can access groups by clicking the Applications tab on the bottom left of your screen. In that menu, you should see Groups as an option. Click that link, and you'll see two columns—groups recently joined by your friends and groups to which you belong. You can also search for groups or create a new one by clicking the Create A New Group button at the top right of the screen. (The direct URL is: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/create.php>).

For demonstration purposes, we'll create a new group—the Facebook Marketing: An Hour a Day Support Group (Figure 5.8). As you can see on this screen, step 1 involves entering some basics about the group. In Figure 5.9, step 2 asks for specific controls you'd like to attach to the group, including who can post what types of content to the group's page. Sound familiar? It should—you can do similar things with groups as you can do with pages.

Create a Group

Step 1: Group Info

Group Name: Facebook Marketing: An Hour A Day Support Group

Network: Global (Available to all of Facebook)

Description: I having trouble marketing your product or service on Facebook. Come share your troubles here.

Group Type: Business Marketing & Advertising

Recent News: <http://www.facebookmarketnganhouraday.com>

Office:

Email: info@facebookmarketnganhouraday.com

Street: 3925 W. Braker Lane

City/Town: Austin, TX

Create Group Cancel

Note: groups that attack a specific person or group of people (e.g. racist, sexist, or other hate groups) will not be tolerated. Creating such a group will result in the immediate termination of your Facebook account.

Figure 5.8 Facebook Marketing: An Hour A Day Support Group setup

After the simple two-step process, you're done establishing your first group. You may notice that there are no tabs here, nor is there any way to attach applications to your group. The group experience is largely predetermined by Facebook. You have fewer opportunities to customize a group than you do a page. But there are similarities—you can invite members; send messages to members; promote your group with Facebook advertising; announce events; share links, videos, and photos; and establish a discussion group.

Website:

Options:

- Show related groups.
- Show related events.
- Enable discussion board.
- Enable the Wall.
- Enable photos.
- Allow all members to upload photos.
- Only allow admins to upload photos.
- Enable videos.
- Allow all members to upload videos.
- Only allow admins to upload videos.
- Enable links.
- Allow all members to post links.
- Only allow admins to post links.

Access:

- This group is open.
Anyone can join and invite others to join. Anyone can see the group information and content.
- This group is closed.
Admins must approve requests for new members to join. Anyone can see the group description, but only members can see the Wall, discussion board, and photos.
- This group is secret.
The group will not appear in search results or in the profiles of its members. Membership is by invitation only, and only members can see the group information and content.

Figure 5.9 Facebook group setup options

Week 2: Determine and Execute Content Strategy

Profiles, groups, and pages are the three ways to establish a presence on Facebook for your company. But these things are lifeless, not to mention pointless, without content that is updated for friends, group members, or fans to consume on a regular basis.

We see examples all the time of companies that spend significant time, resources, and money building a fancy website with a great user interface. We'll visit these sites to get good examples for use in our own business or for clients, and we're often blown away by what we see. But for every 10 such sites, we probably visit a second time only two or three times, and we're only rarely a recurring visitor to any site we visit. Why? The answer lies in content, or lack thereof. Content is the lifeblood of any successful web presence, yet companies often don't match time spent on world-class web design with a content strategy that is designed to keep the site live, vibrant, and worth visiting on a regular basis.

Monday: Develop a "Product Strategy" for Content

We've talked a few times in this book about the importance of getting on users' News Feeds every day. The only way to do this without annoying people is by providing new,

interesting content at least once a day. So, the Facebook profile, page, or group that you use is merely the container or the infrastructure that holds your presence. The content is the product that users either accept or reject with their continued support.

We've also mentioned the value of mapping your social media presence to your customers' needs. What do they want? What motivates them? Do their needs change at certain times of the year? Why would they recommend your site, product, or social media presence to their friends? What would make them comment and/or interact more with your Facebook presence? You will hit the mark if you think carefully about the needs of your different market segments and then meet those needs with content.

When we think of any new social media presence for a new client, we instinctively think of magazines. Facebook helps every company, brand, or organization become a publisher of their own online, interactive “magazine.” You can look at the benefits of this and say, “Sure, I’d love my own interactive magazine!” But it comes with a lot of responsibility. You have to maintain your “magazine.” Stop publishing information to it, and you don’t have a publication any longer. People will lose interest if you fail to maintain it. Your “magazine” has a perspective on the world—think through the perspective you want to have and don’t deviate significantly from it. If you do, your fans may get upset with you. But perhaps most important, give people things they can’t or don’t get anywhere else. This doesn’t necessarily mean that your content has to be extraordinary or unique. Your target markets may just consume information primarily through Facebook—and you could be the one to provide a very simple yet helpful service!

Don’t Overadvertise Yourself

The next time you are at a bookstore, pick up a few different types of magazines. Pay attention to how much they advertise themselves. Aside from the necessary insert that falls out of the magazine, you won’t find too many “house ads.” Remember this when establishing your own presence—people don’t need a lot of advertisements for your business when they are already a fan, friend, follower, or member of your group. If you overadvertise, you run the risk of people getting dissatisfied. Focus on the needs of your customer and not the needs of your marketing department.

Tuesday: Talk with Colleagues About the Use/Reuse of Content

The good news is most organizations—large and small—already have mountains of content that would be perfect for sharing through social media. The bad news is that it is likely unorganized or used for entirely different purposes. So, you have a few major

problems that you'll need to resolve if you want to use or repurpose content from your colleagues:

Cultural issues You'll need to help your colleagues get comfortable with repurposing content for sharing through Facebook. Some people will be very happy to share information with you, while others will not. Some of the people may want to share information that isn't appropriate for your social media presence—and some information is just simply uninteresting.

Sourcing and sorting the data You'll need access to information/content and need to organize it to build your library. Some of it may already be online, but the real gems may be offline. You need to learn what is available, and you need to organize it so the content you share covers a wide range of topics and doesn't bore your customers.

Operational realities Ensure you can update your social media presence frequently enough to keep your customers happy. This means that you need a person on tap to make sure that everything is updated as necessary.

If your company doesn't produce enough relevant content for your customers or if you can't reuse enough good content for whatever reason, you can always just point to third-party content that reinforces your company's point of view. Just 10 years ago, some people considered this to be a modern form of plagiarism—publishing a link to or summary of an article originally released on another company's website. In today's world of Google, search engine optimization, Twitter, and link building, it's a best practice. It's funny how times and norms change. Few companies are in a position to produce unique content for social media. Most use a hybrid strategy of sourcing their own content and pointing to the best available content on the Web to maintain sites and social media.

As you talk to your colleagues about these issues, you'll get a clear sense of how your organization views the sharing and production of content. From this feedback, you'll be able to create a strategy and some requirements for keeping your Facebook presence fresh and up-to-date. You'll know the language you should use and the amount of third-party content you can rely upon either on an ongoing basis or on slow days.



Remember that social media makes everyone a publisher of content that reinforces their perspective—be it personal or professional. Individual users have the ability to share content with thousands of people with just the click of a mouse. Take advantage of the fact that everyone is a publisher to get the word out about your campaign.

Wednesday: Set Editorial Policy for Content

Let's review where we are—your social media presence is, in essence, a 21st century form of journalism. You are a publisher of sorts, as are your customers. Success is

driven by interactivity, not by an antiquated measurement of how well you “shout.” Customers are free to interact with your content and your presence, and their reactions can be seen by hundreds or thousands of people. Facebook gives you some opportunities for controlling the flow of information—you’ve probably given a lot of thought to how you can use these controls to make Facebook work for your company.

Editorial policy is very important to ensure that the customer experience with your Facebook presence is consistent and valuable. It is the set of rules that govern what you post, how, and when. We’re not proposing that you go to the effort of creating an editorial policy for the sake of making work. We think it’s a handy way to make sure that everyone associated with your social media presence knows what to do and knows the behaviors that should be avoided. You should have multiple people involved—if for no other reason to mitigate the risk of losing a single person to vacation, illness, and so on.

So, what elements are required for a good editorial policy? The following are a few to consider. Answers to these questions should drive a succinct document that you can circulate to ensure that you don’t have mistakes and to help make tough decisions when they arise:

Purpose Why do you have a Facebook presence? Who are you trying to reach?

Types of content What are the primary types of content that you’ll share? How will you “mix it up” so consumers can get a variety of experiences (and not just status updates or links)?

Tone/language What is the best way to communicate with your customers? Formal language/informal language? Do you joke around? Are you serious? Informative? Authoritative? Will you use third person or first person, or a mix of both?

Subject matter What will you share? From what sources (internal/third party)? What won’t you share? What topics are taboo? Will you change the types of information you release based on circumstances (time of year, the economy, current events)?

Communication Will you engage in a conversation with users through Facebook? Will your presence help people communicate with one another? If it is important to you, how will you use the site to gather customer information?

Organization Can people find what they want easily? If their needs can’t be met through your Facebook presence, can they easily be diverted to your other properties (online or offline)?

Frequency How often will you post? Daily? Five times a week? Twice a day? What is an acceptable range for your posts (low and high)?

Advertising Will you advertise your own products/services through your Facebook presence? If so, how? How often? Will you allow third parties to advertise through your Facebook presence?

Clear communication will help everyone on your team succeed. Remember, you don't want to create a massive infrastructure to post to Facebook and monitor social media, but you do want redundancy and consistency. Know who your "editor-in-chief" is, who that person's backup will be, and who will support them.

The editor's job is to provide a product that customers love and one that they'll enthusiastically recommend to others. You also want to be so in tune with customers' needs that you can intuitively drive the future of your Facebook presence by commissioning new types of content, changing editorial policy, and helping solve problems in other areas of your business.

Finally, it's good to have ways to involve other people in your company in the execution of your social media strategy. Fellow employees may have great suggestions for content, campaign execution, creative, and so on. The lessons of "crowdsourcing" have taught us time and time again that great ideas can come from anywhere—you just have to be open to the possibility. If you can create a system to quickly triage suggestions and ideas, you'll probably get a great idea or two you may not have considered. You'll look better when you are able to humble yourself enough to know that you may not have all the answers.

Thursday/Friday: Perform Your Content Audit

If you're going to do a good job posting content, you need an idea of the assets that you have and those you are willing to share via social media. These can be items that have never been shared with customers or content that is already out there for the world to see on your website. It's OK to post content that is already available—many people have been very successful with Facebook by simply exposing fans to existing content that is available elsewhere on the Web. (You're essentially doing your fans a service by aggregating good content for them!)

Start by classifying the types of content that you have based on whether it is already online. You should have enough content nearby that has already been produced for online consumption—it's your lowest-hanging fruit that probably doesn't require much additional work. Make sure, though, that the content is interesting for your customers. It's better to take a little extra time to get the content right.

Keep in mind also that your users may want some variety in the types of content you post. You need different types of things (articles, blog posts, charts, graphs, numbers, third-party articles of interest, videos, podcasts, and so on) to keep things fresh. You'll also need a good mix of product information, commentary that supports your company or brand, events, sales/offers, and so on. Keep your voice consistent but your content fresh and compelling. This audit should ensure that you have a variety of different things to post and that you're able to see how different types of content encourages fans to interact and share with friends more often.

Crowdsourcing Content

In big organizations, the effort required to collect content to reference or repurpose on Facebook may be very significant. The most efficient way to do it is to spread the work. Set up an easy system for people to submit content or suggest ideas for your social media presence. It takes a lot to explain to people what you need but far less if you can summarize your plan in an e-mail message!

After you have created a list of content for sharing on Facebook, you will likely notice that you have some gems—great content that you know your customers will love. There are two schools of thought about gems. Some people prefer to lead with their best content so the first fans or followers become rabid, enthusiastic evangelists for your brand. Others prefer to hold their best content for later, once a loyal following has been established. There really are no right or wrong answers for this. We usually advise clients to share their best at both times to get the best of all worlds.

Week 3: Add and Experiment with Content

Now it's time to move from ideas to execution—the day-to-day process of keeping your social media presence alive. You have two main options when it's time to publish. You can enter a simple status update, or you can share content. Status updates are good for direct albeit lighthearted interactions with your customer base, while content (in the form of links, photos, videos, imported blog posts, events, etc.) is typically used to share interesting things you want them to see or experience.

Monday: Publish Content to the Wall

Sharing content through Facebook is simple, and the same interface is used for both pages and profiles (Figure 5.10). From either your News Feed screen, your profile, or your fan page, simply click the icon for posting a photo, video, event, or link, and a drop-down box will guide you through completing the process. You can also add a comment to the posted item to add color to the item that you are sharing. To finish, you must click the Share button at the bottom right of the box—it isn't enough to simply attach or upload the item—so be sure to take that last step.

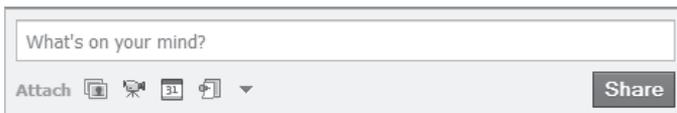


Figure 5.10 Interface for posting content to pages or profiles

As you experiment with posting different types of content, you may notice some subtle differences between the different things you post. Links shared through Facebook are reformatted to include the following:

- Title of the link, pulled from the <Title> tag of the web page being referenced
- A brief summary of the link, pulled from the <Meta "description"> tag of the web page being referenced
- A thumbnail picture that represents the link that is chosen by the poster. (With most all posted links, Facebook pulls in several thumbnails and you can cycle through to select the most appropriate one to post).

This content can also be targeted at specific users, although currently Facebook only allows geographic and language-based targeting. You can edit the title and summary by clicking either and changing the text—but be sure you do this before you click the Share button. Once you click the Share button, you can't edit the post any longer; you can only delete it.

Tuesday: Correct an Erroneous or Embarrassing Post

It's an inevitable reality of publishing to the Web—no matter how careful you are, you are going to make a mistake now and then. Maybe you've posted content to the wrong place. Maybe you said something that you shouldn't have said. In these cases, it's important to stay calm, don't panic, but act fast. If you posted something to your News Feed, you can delete it by going to your profile and hovering over the upper-right corner of your post. A Remove option will appear—click it, and the content will be removed from your profile and the News Feed of your friends. If you posted to your fan page, you can hover over the upper-right corner of your contribution and remove it from there.

You can't stop people from seeing this post in the time it takes you to remove it, but you can minimize the damage of your mistake! In certain cases, it makes sense to acknowledge the mistake and apologize openly to people who associate with you. In other cases, it's just better to let a sleeping dog lie. You'll have to make the judgment call to determine exactly how and if you should address mistakes that you inadvertently publish.

Fortunately, mistakes are not discoverable long-term unless they're so bad that someone took a screen capture of your mistake and has decided to share it somewhere on the Web. Search engines are beginning to catalog data shared via social media for discoverability and to make search engines more accurate. But as of now, there isn't a "Wayback Machine" (www.archive.org) for social media, though there are third party services springing up that back up social media sites—such as SocialSafe.net and Backupify.com—so you never know what's being kept on a backup.

Wednesday: Post Videos and Photos

You can share individual photos, create an album to commemorate photos of a certain theme, or take new photos with your webcam. As with other types of content sharing on Facebook, this process is also very simple—uploading a photo requires you to browse for it on your hard drive and click Share. For an album, you simply give your album a name, a location, and access settings for users or groups of users who may see your pictures. Then you upload the pictures you’d like to put into that album. You can add a description to albums and individual photos; plus you can tag friends who appear in photos. Other options include the ability to select a specific photo for the album cover, reorganizing the order in which photos appear in an album, and posting the album (and/or individual photos) onto your profile using the Share button.

Posting an event is very simple also—just give it a title, a location, and a date/time. You can invite individual friends, friend lists, or other people via e-mail who may not even have a Facebook account. Similar to other types of content, events and photos may be “liked” or commented upon by other Facebook users.

Posting a video is a little more confusing. Facebook gives you two main options for dealing with video—either you can record a video with a webcam or you can upload an existing video from your hard drive. A webcam can be an interesting way to “personalize” your brand or company, but most companies will probably not use this feature for marketing purposes. Most will instead opt to upload a video from a hard drive that has been edited in some way. Figure 5.11 shows some of the options you have for adding details to your videos, such as adding a title and controlling who can view your video. It usually takes some time for Facebook to process your video, so don’t expect it to post to your profile or page immediately. After it is uploaded, you may want to “share” your video again from your profile or page. Uploaded videos don’t always make it to the News Feed, so it may be helpful to share it again to be safe.

Figure 5.11 Video details

What about YouTube you ask? Well, at this snapshot in time you will need to share YouTube videos as a link. Interestingly enough, YouTube videos that are shared within Facebook can play inside the Facebook profile or fan page. So, a user doesn't have to go outside Facebook to see a video that is shared. How nice of Facebook! YouTube provides significant search engine optimization benefits, so this is an excellent way to optimize your presence and links of different types across popular web properties. People can still "like" or comment on your YouTube videos just as they can "like" or comment on other links you share.

Thursday: Experiment with Content

Experimentation is key throughout any Internet marketing project, but it's particularly interesting early in social media marketing. Why? Because when you start, you have no idea at all exactly how customers will react to you. The beginning is in some ways the scariest part of the project whether you are a marketing manager, a consultant, or just a friend giving free advice. You've sold the benefits of social media, and you've sold people on your abilities. You probably also showed examples of successful companies and how they were able to succeed with social media. If management has agreed to a project, they're probably expecting it to produce.

Don't fret—the answer lies in truly becoming expert in how the little things you do impact performance as measured by fans, friends, and so on. For example, you can learn the following:

- What happens when you post a link/photo/video/note?
- How do customers respond differently to different types of content?
- How often should you post new content?
- How do customers respond to unique content that is unavailable anywhere else on the Web? Is the response different from when you post content that exists on your website? Third-party content?
- Are customers disappointed if you don't post an update frequently enough?

As measured by the following:

- Increase/decrease in fans/friends/followers/group members
- Sign-ups to a newsletter or other lead generation mechanism
- Number of comments
- Number of "likes"
- Increase in traffic to your website
- Increase in referrals from Facebook.com web pages to your website

Remember that every action you take has a reaction from your customer base. The best practice for capturing this information is to keep a spreadsheet with details on what you post and outcomes over the subsequent 24 hours. Don't rely on memory

or anecdotes for this information. If you get into a habit of recording the data for outcomes, you'll have a great resource that you'll use in a variety of ways you can't possibly predict in advance. We'll talk in more detail about creating useful analytics for monitoring and measurement in Chapter 9, "The Analytics of Facebook."

Rising Tides Raise All Boats

As your numbers grow, you'll probably notice more and more interaction on your properties. This is a great thing—congratulations! But remember that with increased numbers, you should expect increased interaction. Hold yourself to higher standards as you generate a larger following.

Friday: Fill Your Presence with Content and People

All week, you should have been gradually adding content to your presence according to the editorial policy and cadence that you set previously. A Facebook presence that is not maintained on a regular basis runs the risk of losing supporters. Sure, it's difficult to maintain something that is so public, but it's key to your success.

You're really looking to fill the presence with content so you don't have white space in the Wall and other places where people will be viewing your presence and making judgments about your organization. The minimum bar here is to fill available space with information and to do so often enough to communicate that you've made a commitment to the presence and that it is valuable. In most cases, you'll need to answer the basic organization profiling questions on the Info tab, and you'll need at least half a dozen pieces of content, status updates, videos, links, and so on, on your Wall.

After you've achieved the minimum bar, you're ready to tell more people about your Facebook presence. This would be an appropriate time to invite people—employees, partners, friends, family, and so on. Just as with content, you'll need supporters for your presence to communicate to other people visiting for the first time that you are relevant and interesting. The more people you have willing to associate with your organization, the more it appears to be a seemingly unbiased third-party endorsement to strangers and other people who you'll also need to be successful.

Week 4: Monitor and Modify the Plan

At this point, your project should be in full swing. You've picked the means of interacting with your customers (page, profile, and/or group), and you've started posting content to fill out your presence. You have an editorial understanding, you have a voice, and you are committed to posting content on a regular basis to keep your customers happy and informed. Although you are only a week or two into the campaign, the only things you haven't done are Facebook advertising and detailed reporting/

analytics—things that are more appropriate later in the campaign. Some parts of the project are proving to be easy, but others unfortunately are not—this is the time to fill gaps in your operational plan.

Monday/Tuesday: Reassess Your Progress

In Chapter 3, we discussed the discrete tactical tasks necessary to effectively produce your Facebook presence. In Chapter 4, we talked about a few things to consider when assessing your competitors. You've learned a lot about what it takes to get the job done and the challenges you face. So, let's now make sure you can do the job.

Figure 5.12 shows a simplistic view of the cycle of work for any Facebook marketing campaign. While you're always doing a few of these things simultaneously, you start with a theory on the types of content that would be interesting to your customers. You post that content on a reasonable cadence and with editorial policy and voice that fits both your brand and your customer segments. You monitor results and feed a reporting mechanism that will give you time-trending data for later analysis. This analysis feeds revisions to your plan and your approach, and the cycle refreshes. It's rare for this cycle to only go around a few times—you'll iterate repeatedly learning the entire way.

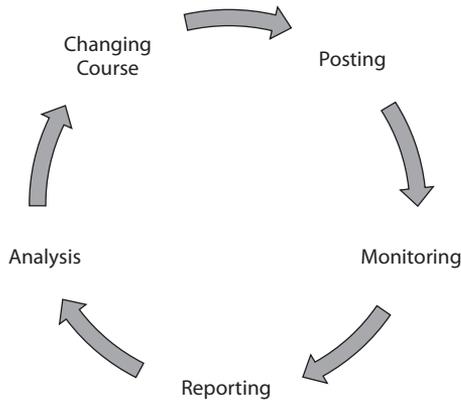


Figure 5.12 Facebook marketing cycle

It's probably too early after a single week to make dramatic changes to your approach—you want enough data to inform decisions. How much data is enough? Typically, a few weeks will smooth out things such as three-day weekends, holidays, vacation schedules, and other types of seasonality that can dramatically impact results. So, let's hold off on data for a few more weeks—we'll cover analytics in detail in Chapter 9. For now, let's focus on the operational issues that you face, for example:

- Are you handling the workload, or are you overwhelmed by the project?
- Are you confident in the choices you've made regarding your social media presence (Facebook, Twitter if appropriate, and elsewhere)?

- Is your effort comparable to or, better yet, better than, your competitors’?
- As a result of your efforts, are customers interacting with you and other fans/friends/followers more?
- Do you have enough interesting content to keep customers engaged, or are you already finding it difficult to source interesting content?
- Do you think you’re doing the right things, or do you intuitively believe that you are missing out on some opportunity?
- Do your colleagues support you and support the effort? Are you getting necessary management support?

Be honest with yourself—there is no point in lying to yourself or your superiors. We find a very interesting and effective forcing function is a meeting with a friendly senior colleague to assess progress. Have this “mentor” of sorts give you honest feedback on what you’re doing well and what you’re doing poorly. But make sure it’s a friendly person who won’t cause problems! You do need time to iterate and succeed after all.

Wednesday: Get Help Where You Need It

If you are doing a great job and you’re on the way to meeting goals, feel free to skim this part of the chapter or even skip ahead. But if any part of this project to be difficult or too time-consuming, it may be an indication that you need help from someone with the expertise or time to manage the process.

We always recommend that companies look internally first to find colleagues who may be able to offer assistance. Oftentimes, companies have a good person or group willing and able to assist right around the corner. Besides, these projects tend to be interesting—so you may get more cooperation than you expect. Keep in mind that if you’re the one responsible, you are the primary person to get the job done. This isn’t an opportunity or justification for you to get your colleagues to do work for you. But if for whatever reason you can’t find help or if it doesn’t fit your company’s culture to share responsibilities across different groups, you can always get help from people who specialize in Facebook marketing or social media.

Find Experts Who Do What You Can’t

If you’re fortunate enough to work in a company that can afford to pay for social media expertise, hold firm to a simple rule. Find vendors who do what you can’t. Make a list of things in your campaign that you struggle with. Then use that list to find vendors with expertise in those exact areas. You can get the expertise you need as long as you know specifically what you need and you remain in charge throughout the process!

When assessing third parties who can help with your social media project, first know exactly where you need help. Draft a list of goals you want a third party to solve for you. Make sure you're assessing people against the likelihood they'll solve your problems first. Oftentimes consultants will want to do a different part of the project—so you have to stand firm. You should always be open to suggestion, but you should also make sure you hold third parties accountable for the exact surgical help necessary to advance your campaign. The right person to help with the day-to-day maintenance of a social media presence may be different from the right person to help with high-level strategy. Get the right person for the right job.

While doing your due diligence on consultants, consider that the world has spawned a lot of “social media experts.” Scrutinize people, and consider a few other things as you make your decision:

Background Has the person, or the principals of the consulting business, had a track record of optimizing new technologies and running successful campaigns?

Fit Is the consultant able to do the things you need them to do? Are they a strategist, someone who can roll up their sleeves and get the job done, or both? Strategy and implementation are two different things—many consultants like to gravitate to the sexy strategy work when you may not even need it, and then you're still left with the need for implementation. Clear communication is key.

Expertise Can the person truly do the job for you? Have they or the company done projects for clients similar to yours? Does the person ask you a wide variety of relevant, fact-finding questions? (The more thorough a third party is in their initial intake process, the more likely they'll do a good job for you, assuming they also have the track record to back this up).

Validation Have third parties validated their or the company's expertise? Are former clients willing to share success stories or references?

Training is critically important. Once set up, a lot of Web 2.0 projects can run on autopilot if someone on staff is able to monitor success and failure. Hold consultants to a high standard that includes training and an exit plan. You don't want to pay a consultant ad infinitum, and you shouldn't have to if you've hired the right person or company.

Thursday/Friday: Produce the First Reports and Analysis on Your Progress

In your company, it may have taken a committee to decide to approve your Facebook marketing project, or it may have taken just a single person. In either event, sharing the things you've learned early in the campaign is a handy tactic to reinforce the decision and to set the right tone for the future. This would be a great time to share initial findings with interested parties.

What constitutes a good report? We've always had success by sharing data on effort and outcomes. What has taken place and what happened as a result—all in the

language of numbers. But you can't stop there—a good report will also have some seemingly objective analysis. You're the one writing the report—you'd be remiss to not take the opportunity to offer your interpretation of the numbers and what they mean.

Start slow and try to focus on a single metric or two in the early phases of the project. Figure 5.13 is an example of a good, simple page views graphic provided by Facebook Insights that would be perfect to share early in a campaign. Add a simple commentary to something like this, and you have your first report! Your colleagues are not nearly as expert as you are on Facebook marketing, so reporting will need to reflect important data points that can be both easily understood and easily explained. Over time, you'll have the opportunity to get more complex as people learn alongside you.



Figure 5.13 Basic early campaign report for fan page

You won't have a lot of time-trending data early in the project, but that's OK. Show what you can, and make sure you manage your colleagues' expectations. Learning often is a huge benefit when companies decide to do social media work in-house. Focus on what your effort has taught you and how it informs future decisions.

Featured Case: *Mad Men* Case Study

For cable channel AMC, August 26, 2008, was a difficult day. Some fans of the show *Mad Men*, a property of AMC, had taken it upon themselves to establish Twitter accounts in the names of the show's characters. Not only that, but they were Twittering in-character and had created an alternate world of "Twittertainment" for fans of the show between episodes. That doesn't seem like such a bad thing, does it?

Well, that wasn't the cause of the difficulty. The day went south not because of the fans' actions but because of how AMC responded. It appears that AMC demonstrated its complete misunderstanding of the benefits of grassroots viral marketing and social marketing channels like Facebook by issuing a Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) takedown notice to Twitter. AMC claimed copyright ownership over the characters' names and the fan fiction that was being created in "an unauthorized manner" on the microblogging site.

Continues

Featured Case: *Mad Men* Case Study (Continued)

As expected, Twitter suspended the accounts and began an investigation of them. Twitter really had no option in this case because the act requires that Twitter take the action it did.

Of course, also as expected, it took less than one day for the fans of the show to explode in anger across the Internet on blogs, on Facebook, and of course on Twitter to show their displeasure over the heavy-handed tactics employed by AMC. To be fair to AMC, there is some confusion in the public about what actually happened during this kerfuffle. In several articles, AMC claims that it never sent any DMCA takedown notices to Twitter. At the same time, Twitter isn't talking about what happened or why the accounts were suspended. So, although it is difficult to ascertain what was happening in the background at AMC and at Twitter, what is clear is that a show about advertising had been created by people who didn't understand that the issues faced by the Sterling Cooper agency in the world of Madison Avenue in 1962 was very, very different from the issues a similar agency would have faced in 2008. The issue at hand here is that—say it with us—you no longer control the brand.

According to a piece in *Business Week* on August 26, 2008, Deep Focus, AMC's web marketing agency, stepped up and pointed out to its client that all this fan activity and positive attention toward the show was, how do you say, "good" for the show. NYMag.com put it best: "AMC's Web-marketing group knocked some skulls together at AMC HQ. IT'S FREE ADVERTISING!"

After some backroom discussions about the benefits of fans providing free buzz for the show, AMC's decision makers apparently rescinded the DMCA takedown notice that they claimed they never sent. Twitter restored the accounts, and all was right for fans of the 1960s world of Madison Avenue once again.

Has AMC Changed Its Mind-Set?

Now fast-forward a year later. AMC's current mind-set in regard to social media has completely changed since that cold PR day in August of 2008. Let's be honest, if the end of the story was simply "another big media company doesn't get social media, sticks foot in mouth and head in the rear," then this event wouldn't be in this book. The reason? There are far too many of those stories out there today. Not one of them stands alone any longer. Any time the end of the story is "so-and-so screwed up and went away," there's nothing to learn from that event.

Today, AMC is using online marketing channels like Facebook to promote *Mad Men* and other shows with a successful, comprehensive strategy that covers several social media platforms and drives new, measurable interest in the show daily. Any agency executive at a 1960s Madison Avenue agency would be wise to sit up and take notice.

What's the State of the *Mad Men* Facebook Community?

AMC has created a focused, vibrant community filled with dynamic content that is not only popular with the show's loyal fans but is also entertaining for the casual observer. Building a large following for your Facebook presence requires a network of other platforms, microsites, and offline campaigns, working in conjunction to drive visitors to your fan page.

As you can see on AMC's *Mad Men* landing page (www.amctv.com/originals/madmen), it has a link to its Facebook fan page, its blog, its Twitter profile, and its iPhone app. AMC leverages the traffic its *Mad Men* landing page gets and pushes the audience to its Facebook fan page along with other social platforms.

Many social media campaigns lack this level of integration. They assume their consumers on other social networks will find them on their own. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. AMC understands this and actively courts users to visit one platform from others.

Has the fan base for *Mad Men* been increased? Yes. According to AllFacebook.com, a site that tracks the growth of fan pages on Facebook, The *Mad Men* Facebook fan page is seeing a growth of about 25,000 new fans per month as of October 2009. The fact that the demographic targeted by the marketing team for *Mad Men* aligns well with the demographic that is most active on Facebook has been helpful in this area.

After the Twitter debacle, AMC has learned that connecting all your social platforms with the brand website acting as a hub not only can help introduce consumers to your other marketing channels but can also help grow overall brand awareness.

Has AMC Increased Awareness for the TV Show and Brand?

In a word, "Yes!" In two words, "Absolutely, yes!"

But there's one important thing to remember. As we mentioned previously, this wasn't solely done with Facebook. It's critical that you understand that launching a successful PR campaign online requires the involvement of several different platforms and methodologies. To get to the question of how AMC found success on Facebook for *Mad Men*, it's necessary to look outside of Facebook to see what other things AMC was doing online and offline during this campaign.

It seems that no one questions the stereotype in the show of Madison Avenue executives drinking at all hours of the day or night. Brian Rea, 82, worked at the Little Club in the 1950s, a popular Midtown restaurant. He's quoted in the *New York Times*: "Lunch was a big thing," he said. "They took two and a half hours. We had a lot of agency people come in, from Cunningham & Walsh, BBDO, all having serious lunches with drinks" (www.nytimes.com/2009/08/12/dining/12don.html?_r=1).

Continues

Featured Case: *Mad Men* Case Study (Continued)

“Cocktails have been a vital element of the show right from the opening scene,” says Robert Simonson in the same *New York Times* piece. The first scene in season 1 shows Don Draper sitting in a bar. We learn his drink preference, ‘Do this again—old-fashioned, please,’ before we know his name or what he does for a living.”

When Deep Focus deployed a few microsites in order to support the show and create excitement around the brand, it only made sense that it played to this theme. One of the sites it created was the 1960s Cocktail Guide. It shows fans of the show how to make swanky, hip adult beverages just like the ones that the advertising executives at Sterling Cooper would have had. Now fans can enjoy the show with an authentic Gibson Martini or Manhattan in hand. The fans loved the guide, and so did the traditional press. According to the *New York Times*, blurbs about the microsite were written about on blogs such as the pop-culture RetroModGirl (<http://retromodgirl.blogspot.com/2009/08/madmen-60s-cocktail-guide.html>) and the foodie blogs TheKitchn (www.thekitchn.com/the-kitchn/the-cocktails-of-mad-men-the-new-york-times-092767) and SlashFood (www.slashfood.com/2009/08/12/mad-men-party-guide).

News aggregation sites (http://showhype.com/story/mad_men_cocktail_guide) promoted the microsite, as did Oprah.com (www.oprah.com/article/food/partyp1anning/20090915-mad-men-cocktail-party). There, the pitch to consumers was “Host a cocktail party Betty Draper would be proud of.” For each of these scenarios, the blog post or article links to the AMC landing page for *Mad Men* or to its own social media profiles on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

How Does AMC Use Facebook to Drive Attention So It Can Sell Ads During the Show?

Coffee brand Eight O’Clock is the main sponsor of AMC’s social media efforts for *Mad Men*. However, let’s look at how AMC partners Eight O’Clock Coffee with *Mad Men*’s social media public relations.

The most popular social media campaign at the beginning of season 3 for *Mad Men* was the “Mad Men Yourself” avatar-making site. The site was created by Deep Focus, sponsored by Eight O’Clock Coffee, and promoted on the *Mad Men* fan page and Twitter. The site allows fans to create stylized avatars for use with any of their social media sites. Not only has the site been a huge hit with fans of the show, but the art created by the site has become a very popular meme on Twitter. In late September 2009, a quick search finds all types of positive conversations encouraging peers and friends to the site.

Essentially, the excitement driven by the 1960s hip icons created an army of *Mad Men* evangelists—directing fans and nonfans alike to the Eight O’Clock sponsored site to get their own version of customized 1960s icons for their MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook profiles.

As of this writing, we are not aware of any additional brand integration with the coffee maker and the show. It would be interesting to see further crossover. For instance, why not have Sterling Cooper, the advertising agency featured in the show, take on Eight O’Clock Coffee as a client in the storyline? Perhaps a simple campaign of product placement would suffice. Why are the characters in the show not walking around the office with paper coffee cups emblazoned with the Eight O’Clock Coffee logo on them?

In any event, you can see how an initial misfire has been turned around, creating a complete social media ecosystem where AMC utilizes Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms not only to enhance the brand but as an integral part of the advertising model used to support the show and network.