

16.4: Facebook



Figure 16.4.1: The Facebook logo *Adapted From Screenshot, Facebook, 2017*

Introduction and stats

Facebook has become the most dominant personal social network in the world. As of late June 2017, 2 billion users are now registered on the platform (that is nearly a third of the world's population), and more than 1.2 billion of them are active on Facebook daily. Because users are spending so much time on Facebook, advertisers and marketers want to capitalise on this audience.

Note

There are over 16 million Facebook users in South Africa (2Oceansvibe, 2017)

Facebook originally presented a means of forming and maintaining online social networks for communities of users who already shared real-world connections, interests and activities. But now, in the realm of social networking, it is unnecessary to have met someone in person to connect with them online. Social networks created new meaning for the term 'friend', with many connections existing solely online. Users can also choose to follow users' public posts without being Facebook friends with them.

Facebook has a number of ways for brands and organisations to use the platform to connect with potential customers. These include business pages, adverts, promoted posts, app promotions and now even direct online sales. Such marketing efforts are especially helpful to small businesses. Facebook enables content creation and distribution, and allows brands to engage with their customers in real-time twoway conversations through their 'page'. Facebook is a powerful platform for the implementation of a digital marketing strategy.

Note

Read more about advertising on Facebook and other social media channels in the chapter on [Social media advertising](#).

Facebook has not only changed social media, it is changing how users access content on the Internet. Many users already receive most of their news and entertainment content through their News Feed on Facebook. Mark Zuckerberg intends to make Facebook the dominant channel through which users access content and online services. In 2014, Zuckerberg announced the plan to take on Google as a search engine and make Facebook the means through which users access the web (Edwards, 2014). It could be argued that Facebook is no longer a social media platform, but a media platform that offers a social community as one of its many facets.

Features

Pages

Personal profile pages remove much of the anonymity of the Internet. Users of social networks reveal a great deal of information about themselves, from basic demographics such as age, gender and location, to nuanced lists of likes and dislikes. By divulging this information to the network, they are sharing it with the networks' advertisers. For marketers, the accessible personal information is like gold and can be used for targeted marketing. While only de-identified data can be accessed for marketing, users are often unaware of the data that is amassing on their online profile. For users, this can lead to privacy risks. Social networks do offer privacy management control options for users, but the default setting shares information. Different levels of information control must be activated in user settings.

Note

To see how much of your data is being shared publicly on Facebook, click on the three dots on the bottom right of your cover image and click 'View as' to view your profiles as an anonymous viewer. Are you surprised by what you see? Each post or share can have a tailored privacy level, either to friends, public or a custom audience.

For brands, a Page is the profile for a brand, organisation or celebrity. It looks very similar to a personal profile, and users can choose to connect with a brand on Facebook by liking its Page.

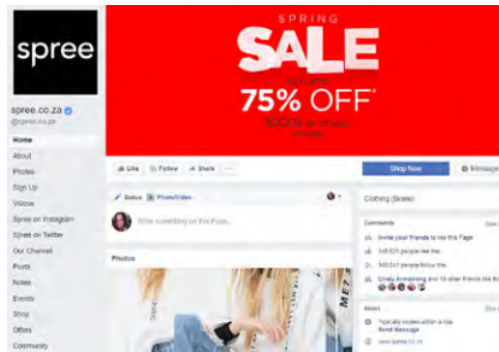


Figure 16.4.2: The Facebook Business Page for Spree *Adapted From Screenshot, Facebook, 2017*

Each Page consists of the following elements:

- A cover/header image, GIF or video (the large banner at the top)
- A profile image that represents the brand
- Buttons to like, share, comment or some other form of call to action
- The 'wall', where the brand's posts and interactions are displayed in a chronological timeline
- Tabs are distinct pages of information on the brand's Page. Tabs can be used to house richer, more graphic content, such as more detailed 'About' pages, photos, videos, services, shop and event news.

Users tend to expect that a credible business would have a Page on Facebook, and neglecting a well thought out presence on the network can lead to lost opportunities.

Reaction buttons



Figure 16.4.3: Reaction button icons *Adapted From Business insider, 2016*

The Facebook Reaction buttons allow users to share their feeling about a certain piece of content with their social circle. The reactions include the original iconic 'Like' button, 'Love', 'Haha', 'Wow', 'Sad' and 'Angry'.

The Like button can also be used on websites outside of the Facebook ecosystem, which allows visitors to recommend this site and content easily, and spot if their friends have liked the same content.

The use of the like button is sometimes tracked as a performance indicator for business Pages, to quantify the amount of reach and engagement for a piece of content. Liking content signifies that someone has actively interacted with it, while liking a brand Page does not prove continual or repeated engagement. For this reason the number of likes on a brand Page can be seen as a vanity metric.

Note

The heart, or Love button, as well as the Like button is used to gauge what content users enjoy the most on their newsfeed. The Facebook algorithm then ensures similar content is shown to the user.

Metrics can't identify who actually read a post, but they can show how many users were reached, shown as impressions, through either paid or organic search. Impressions, shares or comments are much more reliable measures of reach and engagement.

News Feed

News Feed is the term used for the stream of content users see when they log on to Facebook. It's a selection of recent posts and updates from friends, and brands with which they have connected on Facebook.

Facebook uses an algorithm to determine what information to show in each user's news feed.

This algorithm is called the News Feed Algorithm. According to an official Facebook update, the following factors are considered by the algorithm before it displays content in a user's news feed:

- **Who posted it?** – If you engage regularly with this person or brand, Facebook will show you more of their content.
- **Type of content** – Whether the content is a photo, article or video can carry different weight in the algorithm.
- **Interactions** – The number of likes, shares and comments.
- **Recency** – When the content was created or posted.

Stories are ordered, or shown at all, according to the relevancy score that is calculated from the factors listed above.

A user is more likely to interact with content that is displayed in their News Feed, so it is vital to ensure that your page content takes this algorithm into consideration.

There are five things publishers can do to optimise their potential for appearing in news feeds. These are:

- Use compelling headlines
- Avoid being overly promotional
- Try a range of media forms and monitor which is most appreciated by the audience
- Use publisher tools to provide Facebook with audience optimisation and audience restriction information (Facebook, 2016b)
- Use boosted posts or paid ads to gain exposure.

When users tag their friends or brand pages in their personal Facebook content, the post will appear on their page wall, and it will notify the friend and the brand page. If it is a public post, it could be shown to some of the brand page's fans. This is also true for brands tagging other brands, which is encouraged to increase exposure.

Facebook Connect

Facebook users can conveniently login to services or websites other than Facebook with the same login details by using Facebook Connect. Users can grant permission for profile information to be shared between Facebook and the service they have logged in to. Users can also easily see who else in their social circle is using that service, and share information back to their social circle.

Facebook Video

Facebook Video allows for the upload of videos directly to Facebook. These videos play automatically and silently (unless clicked on) as users scroll through their newsfeeds. For brands, these videos have visible view counts, which in turn help more users discover them.

Note

Because the videos start playing automatically, the view counts on Facebook appear much higher than on other sites, and this means that more brands are starting to promote on Facebook Video rather than on YouTube.

To use Facebook Video effectively, and ensure high engagement and high rankings on news feeds, content creators should:

- Focus on quality from the first frame – lead with imagery and key messaging that will draw attention.
- Include text overlay if videos include voice overs – autoplay usually does not include sound, and the text overlay ensures the message is not going unheard.
- Premiere exclusive video content – show content that is only available to users on your page
- Provide context – pull out key quotes as the text component of your post, this helps draw attention and raises expectation of what is to come.

Facebook videos can have calls to action as a button at the end of the video itself or in the post. The video post copy can tag other pages as well (Facebook, 2016).

Facebook Live

Facebook Live allows people, public figures and brands to share live video with their followers and friends on Facebook. It is available to anyone with a page or profile on Facebook. Viewers can react and comment in real time on the video and brands can monitor how the broadcast is going. Facebook Live records the videos as well, which can then be viewed like any other Facebook video. The news feed algorithm has been tweaked to ensure that videos that are actually live are at that moment are more likely to be shown in a user's newsfeed (Facebook, 2017). It is a popular tool for brands and influencers and has proven very successful for

brands like Starbucks, Kohls, and Sephora, as well as influencers like Martha Stewart. Mashable uses Facebook live to release a daily live show (Impact, 2017).

Note

You can find out more about how these brands have used Facebook Live at: [www. impactbnd.com/blog/ facebook-live-businessexamples](http://www.impactbnd.com/blog/facebook-live-businessexamples)

Advertising and marketing with Facebook

Facebook, like many social networks, is free for its members, and relies on advertising for revenue. In turn, Facebook offers opportunities for brands to create a presence and use the existing social network to connect with and reach out to customers. Its search functionality has opened up dramatically and is becoming more advanced, which means it is providing more and more searchable keyword information for market researchers as well.

Note

People come to social networks to socialise and connect, not to see marketing messages; try to respect this by keeping your presence personal and valuable.

Because demographic and psychographic information is collected by the social network, advertisers are able to target their adverts to a very specific audience segment. Facebook ads that use ‘conversion’ objectives during set up, leveraging pixels to track conversions, remarketing and call to action buttons such as ‘buy now’, amongst others, are the most effective and can be tracked to monitor your conversion rates.

A conversion objective encourages users to take some form of action such as clicking through to your site, signing up for a newsletter, browsing your product catalogues, making purchases, and even driving users to visit your brick and mortar store.

Note

Refer to the chapter on [Social media advertising](#) for more information on targeting of your audience.



Figure 16.4.4: Tips for marketing on Facebook Adapted From Infographics Archive, n.d.

Brands can run promotions, offers and competitions through their Facebook Pages, but must ensure that they comply with Facebook’s terms and conditions. You can access offers at the top of your brand’s profile page.

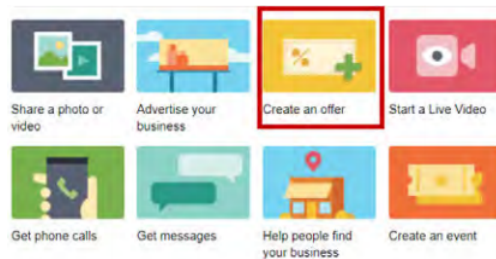


Figure 16.4.5: You can create an offer on your brand's profile page by selecting the icon shown above *Adapted From Screenshot, Facebook, 2017*

Facebook campaign guidelines have become more relaxed and allow users to enter a competition through commenting on a post on Facebook, which does a great job of driving engagement.

Note

Read more about the Facebook competition regulations here: www.facebook.com/page_guidelines.php

Facebook is now a pay to play space, where organic reach has dropped significantly, meaning brands now need to pay to have their content reach users' news feeds.

Selling on Facebook

Facebook is a great tool for education and awareness, which can convert to a sale over time, but up until 2016, this rarely happened through Facebook itself. Users had to click through to the online store via the Facebook page or search for the products on Google and find the online store. Facebook Store, introduced in 2016, enables brands to import their online store onto their Facebook page (www.facebook.com/store.tab), meaning users can shop and purchase without having to leave Facebook.

Facebook is not considered a hard sales platform and is predominantly used for gaining awareness and reach, recruiting leads, or channelling users into a database from which they can be targeted in future marketing, ultimately leading to a sales conversion. At the time of writing, purchases were rarely done directly from Facebook, without the user already being a warm lead, having previously seen a sales-driving advert.

Facebook Analytics

Analytics are the key to informing social media strategy, so monitoring your posts and marketing efforts is essential. Facebook Insights is available to business page administrators. It provides data on how users are interacting with your content and your page. This includes demographic information about the users connecting with your content (age, gender and location breakdown), which tabs and which content posts are seen and interacted with, and how many users hide your content from their news feed and when.

With the inclusion of Facebook Video, Facebook also created Video Insights, which provides metrics for video uploads. You can see unique views, duration, and audience retention, which help you to understand how your videos are performing. Video Insights helps you to refine and revise your video strategy.

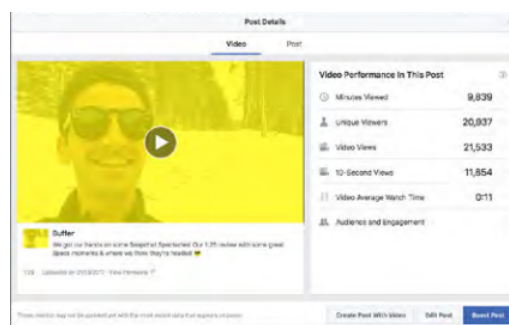


Figure 16.4.6: An example of Video Insights for an individual video on Facebook *Adapted From Buffer Social, 2017*

Facebook summary

Because of its sheer size, 2 billion users and counting, Facebook is a popular marketing choice for many brands. It offers incredible reach and is particularly powerful for brand awareness. Other social media platforms seem to appeal predominantly to younger markets, while Facebook has a broad appeal across age groups, making it a clear winner for brands who want to market to a more mature audience. The accessible analytics, helpful business tools, diverse ad options, and detailed assistance (through <https://www.facebook.com/business>) have all helped to make Facebook the number one social media choice for many marketers.

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