

# The Changing Social Climate:

And how you can harness the power  
for your business.



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# Overview Of Social Media

Social media is changing everything. From how we communicate, to how we do business, to how we read our news.

The biggest change to business is that it is democratizing marketing. Marketing is no longer controlled by mass media, expensive printing firms, or marketing agencies that controlled any kind of direct connection with your customers.

You are now free to create, publish and market your own 30 second advertisement on YouTube and the world can watch. You can publish your own articles and educate your customers with content on your website.

Now you own your marketing distribution platforms, and they're called social networks.

You ARE the publisher. You can engage, distribute and market to your customers and prospects on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social networks.

You now have control over your marketing. It is the end of business as usual. The social climate is changing and we're going to teach you how to harness the power for your business.

## The Challenges

As people, we are slow to change but technology is changing rapidly whether we're ready for it or not. Radio took a whopping 38 years to reach 50 million users; compare that with Facebook which accumulated 200 million users in less than 12 months.

CEOs and management are struggling to keep up with the pace of the technology shift. This is also a cultural challenge. We used to just be competing with the store across the same street or in the same neighbourhood. But modern logistics, online stores and the social web are creating competitors all across the world.

Getting noticed in a daily torrent of over 1.5 billion new pieces of content, more than 200 million tweets and 1.5 million new YouTube videos is like being a grain of sand on the beach. It is hard to stand out. However, there are ways to move your business from invisible to visible.

## The Solutions

Many businesses have not been riding the waves of change as we move to a digital world. From a distance it looks like a ripple on the ocean, but that wave will soon come crashing down on you if you're not prepared for it.

We need to embrace the world of an increasingly digital and social web. We need to accept the fact that most people will find out about our businesses not from advertising, but from Google searches and social media recommendations. Social media and social networks are changing the game.

## Why Use Social Media Marketing?

- It accelerates the speed of your brand message and story. Tweets can be sent in a second while publishing a brochure takes weeks.
- It is networking on steroids (It takes you beyond the Dunbar limitation of 150 connections on a global scale and empowers weak ties) and connects you to customers and prospects globally
- It makes self publishing easy and intuitive. If you own a smart phone and have a Facebook app, you "are" a publisher
- It enlists the power of "World of Mouth"
- It facilitates trust

Any one of these on their own are reason enough to throw your marketing chips on the social media table. All of them combined makes it a no-brainer.

## Core social media marketing principles

Social media marketing is not a one way conversation to push your product or corporate message.

It is about creating content that engages and builds online advocates that facilitate your marketing and online conversations.

There are also some core principles in building a long lasting social media marketing foundation that will carry over from network to network.

- Create liquid content (content that flows well and is easily shared).
- Create linked content (content that is linked to your core brand values).
- Publish to multiple social networks with your core content being on your website and blog.
- Create compelling Multi-Media Content (not everyone wants to read a 400 word article but would view that same content on YouTube or Slideshare)
- Embrace visual communication marketing with images and videos published on Facebook, Google+, Pinterest or Instagram
- Make it easy to share with sharing buttons for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Google+

This will provide the foundation of compelling contagious content that will be shared and will bring customers and prospects back looking for more.

#### **Basics of social media marketing strategy**

Social media is not just a one-off tactic. Approaching it with the idea that all you need to do is publish a Facebook page is a risky approach that will likely not yield any substantial benefits.

First you have to create a social media marketing strategy that defines your audience and marketing goals. Then you implement tactics on multiple social media channels that set out to achieve results that are in line with that strategy.

A great example is the approach taken by the Old Spice brand, which was one of the best integrated social media marketing campaigns in recent memory to utilize a multi-channel and multi-media strategy. While you're not likely to have the marketing dollars to create a campaign exactly like theirs, you can certainly borrow a lot of the basics of their strategy and use them for your small business.

Social media marketing is not a quick fix but needs to be built on the premise that a long term approach will build an online brand asset that keeps delivering results long after first Facebook post has been published. You have to persist and continue to build your audience by keeping them informed, entertained, educated and inspired with great content.

It's like building a home, one brick at a time.

# Benefits Of Social Media For Small Business

One of the main hesitations of any business owner looking to get into social media marketing is believing that it's worthwhile. As social media has evolved to become an integral part of the marketing plan and not just a side project, more clients are asking how to track the ROI.

Including social media costs in your marketing budget requires different metrics and approaches that are unique to each client. However, one alternative short-term solution that could work for any business is to develop a cost-benefit analysis. In fact, let us do that for you! In this post we're going to weigh out the costs and benefits of using social media for business purposes so you can make an educated decision on whether or not it's right for you.

Just a note here that we would never try to push someone to get on social media if they don't truly believe in it. It's very hard to produce results with social media if you don't see the value in it to begin with. If you do see the value in it, however, we would be happy to work with you to develop a strategy for integrating it into your current marketing plan.

## Costs Of Social Media

Why start with the costs of social media? Well it's a much shorter list than the benefits of social media, for one. We also don't want the costs to be the last thing you think about when you're done reading this post. Compared to the benefits you'll find that the costs really aren't all that daunting.

The greatest barrier to entry for social media marketing is getting a commitment from senior management. Without full support from the c-suite, social media won't be taken as a serious addition to your marketing plan. It's difficult to assign a cost to this, but there's no doubt that some effort will be involved.

Social media also requires on-going engagement. This means that at least one member of your staff has to be present and active on social media every day. It's not like a traditional marketing campaign that can run on autopilot.

Content creation is a big part of social media. It's important for brands who want to be successful on social media to get in the habit of creating and publishing their own content in order to stand out from the competition.

Consistent monitoring and tracking of analytics is necessary to measure the success of your strategy. This allows businesses to determine what's working and make adjustments accordingly.

Social media costs at a glance:

- Commitment from senior management
- On-going engagement between staff and social media followers
- Creating and publishing own content
- Consistent monitoring and analytics

## Social Media Benefits

In this section we're going to talk about how to make the business case for social media and how to justify the costs that go into it.

Social media enhances brand awareness. Businesses can cost-effectively increase brand awareness by being present and engaged on social networks.

Social media provides customers with answers and information. By supplying information about products and services that customers actively seek during every step of the purchase process, social media is helping to close sales.

Social media provides ratings and reviews to aid in the purchase process. Businesses can use their social media pages to gather testimonials from current customers to build credibility with future prospects.

Social media helps search ranking. Social media activity is one of the many factors that enhances search engine optimization (SEO) and helps you get found faster in Google.

Social media generates leads and sales. Social media generates leads through shared content that attracts prospects to your business. It can be challenging to close deals on social media, but that's where the initial contact happens that lead to business relationships down the road.

Social media powers earned media. When customers come across interested and engaging information they share it with other. Social shares are referred to as earned media and comes with the added endorsement of the person who shared it.

Social media builds thought leadership. Through sharing their knowledge on social media businesses become known as experts in their field.

Social media provides marketplace insights. By monitoring what's happening on social media within your market you can learn more about your customers and competitors and understand their behaviour better.

Social media mitigates or avoids PR disasters. On social media businesses are able to respond in real time, which can help to extinguish a PR fire or avoid it altogether.

- Social media benefits at a glance:
- Enhances brand awareness
- Offers product information
- Provides customer testimonials
- Enhances SEO
- Generates leads and sales
- Powers earned media
- Builds thought leadership
- Provides marketplace insights
- Avoids PR disasters

### **Conclusion**

The most important takeaway from this post is that the benefits from using social media far outweigh the costs. Not to mention that the costs are relatively low compared to traditional forms of marketing.

# Social Media Best Practice

## **No Shortcuts**

Social media marketing involves investing time, energy and creativity. It's a commitment that can't be avoided or overlooked.

## **Contribute**

If you can't contribute something of value to the community, no one will listen. It's that simple.

## **Position Yourself As An Expert**

Why would anyone take advice from someone who doesn't know anything? If you need to learn more, make the effort to do so. Make sure you can offer valuable advice to your fans and followers.

## **Meaningful Conversation**

If you aren't saying anything meaningful then you're just adding to the noise and risk being ignored.

## **Activity Does Not Equal Productivity**

Just because you're active doesn't mean you're producing results. Be productive, not noisy.

## **Quality Over Quantity**

Keep it simple. Offer friendly, concise gems of advice rather than constant rambling.

## **Don't Spam**

Constant self-promotion isn't engaging. If you're constantly drawing attention to yourself you're communicating that you're not interested in your audience.

## **Keep It Real**

Be authentic. Give your audience something unique by drawing on your own experiences, knowledge, humour etc.

## **Conversation Is A Two Way Street**

Give your audience an opportunity to contribute. If you're dominating the conversation it becomes a lecture instead of a successful marketing strategy.

## **Connection Doesn't Imply Permission**

Take the time to build relationships and trust with your audience. Just because someone follows you on social media doesn't give you permission to sell to them.

## **Adaptability Is Essential**

What's hot today may not be hot tomorrow. Keep up with industry trends and be willing to adapt.

## **Accomplish Goals**

If social media marketing isn't helping you accomplish business goals then it's just a hobby. Measure your efforts and make adjustments as needed.

## **Use Images And Multimedia**

A picture is worth a thousand words. Video is worth even more. Don't just tell, use social media to show them as well.

### **Always Follow Up**

Don't ignore fans and followers who make an effort to socialize with you. Always follow up; it makes people feel valued and more likely to keep listening to you.

### **Mind Your Manners**

Fans and followers aren't always polite, they may disagree with your content or views from time to time. If they speak up, always respond in an appropriate manner.

### **Patience Is A Virtue**

Social media marketing rarely delivers instant results. Don't give up after a short time. Be patient and you will reap the rewards.

### **Don't Be An Obsessive Joiner**

Joining too many networks can dilute your marketing efforts. Spreading yourself too thin can harm any marketing campaign. Limit your social networks to the ones that are most pertinent to your goals.

### **Have Fun**

If you're not enjoying yourself, you're not doing it right. Social interactions should be fun and purposeful.

# Ways Social Media Has Changed The World

Social media has not only changed the world forever, it has been changed for the better. Specifically, there are three notable changes that will forever change the way business is conducted.

## **Everyone Has Equal Opportunities**

Years ago, starting a business required making a physical product to sell. In addition to inventory you also needed funding, assets and a tie to the traditional business infrastructure. These business barriers have since been destroyed by the opportunities provided by social media.

The amount of funding needed to start a business is reduced with people starting businesses out of their own homes. Many businesses launched today succeed by selling purely digital goods, which means having a warehouse full of inventory isn't a concern. Business relationships can all be made online through social networking, which allows new business owners to be successful even if they're not well connected.

All of the limitations that previously held back business owners are all but becoming non-factors in today's digital world. The playing field is more level than ever before, and this is a phenomenon that has only been a reality for as long as we have been using social media.

## **Everyone Is Connected**

There are now 1 billion registered users on Facebook and over half of them use it every day. There has been no other point in history when a business has had that kind of market penetration.

Many businesses have their own blogs and Twitter feeds as well, multiplying the number of people they can reach directly. If you need to talk to your customers you no longer have to limit yourself to placing ads with well established media companies, you can communicate with them directly.

Social media gives businesses a real-time perspective on how well they're doing and how they can improve. Through customers' comments you can learn how they're responding to your products and services more quickly than ever before.

## **Everyone Can Help**

Social media is responsible for meaningful progress on difficult global issues, thus helping to make the world a better place. Our collective, networked intelligence is our greatest hope for continuing to solve complex problems in the future.

Unfortunately in the business world many companies that are struggling to remain relevant are being lead by someone who can't even be talked into having a Facebook page. Working with this mindset makes it difficult to solve complex business problems while keeping up with the pace of today's world.

With social media you're never on your own when it comes to solving problems. Social media is organized by hives of experts dedicated to helping people with specific problems. Most of them will happily provide free content to help you out, or even assist you personally if you make the effort to engage with them.

Social media makes it possible for small businesses to thrive with as few as two or three people on staff if they've built up a solid network of social media connections. Social businesses are no longer limited by time, resources or available staff. They have a whole team of virtual associates to assist them.

## **Conclusion**

Social media has changed the business world in several profound ways. It has levelled the playing field for business owners, giving everyone a more equal opportunity than ever before. It has created an immediate direct connection between businesses and their customers, making it easier than ever to reach them. And it has enabled a near endless amount of expertise for anyone to tap into at a given moment.

Social media has changed the world for everyone, not just business owners. We hope you'll join us as it continues to evolve.

# General Social Media Stats

## Most Popular Social Media Sites

(by numbers of minutes spent per month on average per user)

- Facebook (700 minutes)
- Pinterest (400 minutes)
- Twitter (89 minutes)
- LinkedIn (21 minutes)

## Top Brands In Canada

(by number of Facebook likes)

- Spencer's (2,002,449 likes)
- Pantene (1,041,835 likes)
- Irish Spring (1,010,780 likes)
- Kit Kat (859,524 likes)
- Smarties (855,773 likes)

## Age Distribution

Facebook:

- Less than 20% of users are under the age of 24
- 35% of users are between the age of 25-34
- The majority (65%) of users are over the age of 35
- The average Facebook user is 40 years old

Twitter:

- 25% between 18-24
- 25% between 34-35
- 55% older than 35
- The average Twitter user is 37 years old

LinkedIn

- 5% between 18-24
- 15% between 25-34
- 79% over 35
- The average LinkedIn user is 44 years old

Pinterest

- 10% between 18-24
- 27% between 25-34
- 63% over 35
- The average Pinterest user is 40 years old

## Gender Distribution

- Twitter and Facebook have the same gender distribution: 40% male, 60% female
- Pinterest is female dominated with 79% female users and 21% male.
- LinkedIn has a virtually equal gender distribution of 50/50

SOURCES:

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# Social Media Stats For Canadian Small Businesses

## What Sites Are They Using?

- 82% Use Facebook and Google+
- 48% use Twitter
- 47% use Youtube

## Who Is Using It?

- 29% of small business owners in Canada say they use social media
- 33% of businesses in mining, oil and gas, and manufacturing use social media
- 67% of arts, travel and tourism businesses use social media

## How Are They Using It?

- 39% of Canadian business executives use social media to increase brand awareness
- 21% use it to recruit top talent
- 17% use it to better understand their customers
- 72% planned to invest the same or more in social media this year than they did the previous year
- 39% believe social media is no longer an option in business, but a necessity

## What Is It Costing Them?

- 58% of businesses saw a drop in marketing costs by moving to social marketing
- Of those using social media, 54% spend less than 2% of their budget on social media while nearly half spend less than five hours a week using it.

## Why Do Businesses Not Use It?

- 49% of businesses who don't use social media say their company "doesn't need it"
- 36% of business leaders over the age of 50 said a lack of knowledge of social media as their greatest barrier
- One in ten businesses say staff shortages are preventing them from using it
- 25% of businesses who don't use social media say they plan to over the next two years

## How Attentive Are Businesses On Social Media?

- 70% of businesses ignore complaints on Twitter
- 95% of Facebook wall posts are not answered by businesses
- Auto-posting to Facebook decreases likes and comments by 70%

## How Engaged Are Customers?

- 58% of people say they like a business page on Facebook simply because they're a customer
- 57% of people say they like a business page on Facebook to get access to discounts and promotions
- 56% of consumers say they are more likely to recommend a business after becoming a fan on Facebook

# Goal Setting – Knowing Your Business

The first phase of goal setting for social media strategy building deals specifically with gathering and analyzing information about your business and your audience.

The basis of effective communication is self-awareness. Before building a strategy you must have a thorough understanding of your business--its performance, its reputation and its structure. The first phase of goal setting involves a public relations audit, an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of your business.

A traditional marketing method is called a SWOT analysis, because it considers the businesses strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Typically, a SWOT analysis would look at each of these from two perspectives: internal and external. It's important not to let your mind get clouded by the idea that your business is strong and that all weaknesses come from the outside. What follows here is a more elaborate analysis that focuses on three aspects of the organization: its internal environment, its public perception and its external environment.

Before moving on to the details of the analysis it's important to point out that openness is key. To create an effective strategic plan you must be honest in identifying the weaknesses and limitations of your business, as well as its strengths. If your business is second best, admit it to yourself and proceed from there. Don't pretend your business is something its not. No effective social media strategy has ever been built on fabricating the truth. It also does you no good to overlook flaws and shortcomings.

## Internal Environment

Since social media marketing involves more than just words, begin by looking at your business's performance and structure, and any internal impediments to success. Here is an overview of each:

- **Performance:** This includes the quality of goods and services provided by your business, as well as the viability of the causes and ideas it supports. This audit looks at the quality both as it is now and as it was in the past. It also considers the level of satisfaction that the leaders of the business have with this quality.
- **Niche:** A niche is your business's specialty--the function or role that makes your business different from similar businesses.
- **Structure:** This is specifically a review of the purpose or mission of your business as it relates to the situation at hand. As well as the role that social media plays within your business's administration. One important consideration is whether social media marketing factors in to your business's decision-making process, or whether it's merely implemented after decisions have been made by others. This audit also considers business resources that can be utilized as part of the strategic plan, including personnel, equipment, time and budgets. No commitments are made here, you're just identifying available resources.
- **Internal Impediments:** Here you consider any impediments or obstacles within your business that might limit the effectiveness of your social media marketing plan. For example, many practitioners have expressed that the education in their field did not prepare them for the lack organizational support, the need for continuing vigilance and the amount of political in-fighting that goes on within some businesses. Bruised egos, shortsighted executives, company favourites, and other barriers must be considered as you develop your plan. An impediment is not an insurmountable barrier, it's more like a slow-moving truck on a country road. You can allow the truck to set the pace and remain behind it, or you can carefully and safely pass the truck and continue on your way.

## Public Perception

What people think about your business is the key focus for this section. This perception is based on both visibility and reputation.

- **Visibility:** The extent to which an organization is known is called visibility. More specifically, this includes

whether people know about your business, what they know about it and how accurate this information is. Social media marketing can do a great deal to affect the visibility of your business.

- **Reputation:** Reputation is based on your business's visibility, which deals with how people evaluate the information they have. It is the general idea and feeling people have towards your business. Reputation is based on words and actions. It's based on the verbal, visual and behavioural messages, both planned and unplanned, that come from your business. You may think of reputation as a single perception, but it can be inconsistent from one public to another and from one time to another. Generally speaking, the stronger your business's visibility the more positive the reputation. On the other hand, low visibility suggests the need to create more awareness. And a poor reputation calls for efforts to improve your public perception. Social media marketing can help enhance, protect and create a consistent reputation for your business.

### **External Environment - Finding Your Audience**

The analysis of your business concludes with an examination of its external environment. Specifically, this analysis looks at supporters, competitors, opponents, and other external barriers. Here is an overview of each.

- **Supporters:** Every business has a group of supporters--the people and groups who are likely to help your business achieve its goals. What groups share similar interests and values?
- **Competitors:** Every business also has competitors, people or groups who are doing the same thing as you are in essentially the same market. Additionally, the mere fact that another business is doing roughly the same thing you are doesn't make them a competitor. Proximity is important as well. For example, a business in Espanola may have competitors on Manitoulin Island or even in Sudbury, but likely not as far as North Bay. Businesses doing similar things in different areas might be better considered as colleagues, and as such can be valuable resources for information and perhaps assistance.
- **Opponents:** Another important aspect of the external analysis is to consider the nature of any rivalry that may exist. Opponents are people or groups who are against your business because of something it says or does, or even because of its very existence. There's a big difference between an opponent and a competitor. Consider a store that specializes in selling coffee, for example. A competitor would be another store in the same area that sells coffee, while an opponent might be someone against your store for not selling fair trade and/or ethically sourced coffee. The other store just wants to sell its products, while the opponent wants to disparage your business. Consider the various types of opponents and the potential impact of social media communication when you are analyzing this aspect of your external environment.
- **Advocates:** may oppose your business because they support something else, and you appear to stand in the way of it. Their tactics are mainly vocal. Through public communication, such as social media, you may be able to find common ground for discussion and maybe start seeing eye to eye.
- **Activists:** are similar to advocates, but they want more than discussion. They generally seek change, so their opposition to your organization may be a by-product of their goal. Communication might reveal and promote a common basis for at least limited cooperation. But realize that activists, by definition, seek something specific and tangible, so talk alone won't move them.

### **External Impediments**

Additionally, it's important to consider external impediments like social, political or economic factors outside of a business that might limit the effectiveness of a social media marketing plan. Employment rate is a particularly relevant external impediment that should be taken into account right now.

The ability to identify and analyze publics is the cornerstone of an effective social media marketing campaign. The two elements of this include identification and analysis. First the planner needs to address the right groups of people. Then the planner must carefully examine each public in order to develop a strategy to communicate effectively.

# Goal Setting Part 2 – Knowing Your Audience

## What Is An Audience?

An audience is a group of people that shares a common interest with an organization, recognizes its significance and sets out to do something that benefits it. Such as purchasing its products and services, or recommending it to others. An audience is made of of publics, markets and audiences.

- **Public:** A public is like your family. You don't pick them, they just are. Publics may be helpful or annoying, friendly or not, but a business must deal with them regardless. Publics exist because of their interaction and interdependency with your business.
- **Market:** A market is more like your friends. You pick them and they pick you. Most people selects friends based on shared interests and common values. Businesses develop their markets among those publics with whom they intend to conduct business or generate support from. Markets include people with characteristics (age, income, lifestyle etc.) that can help the business achieve its bottom line.
- **Audience:** Audiences are merely people who pay attention to a particular medium of communication and receive messages through it. A business's relationship with an audience is usually brief, such as the length of time it takes to read an article or listen to a speech--much more temporary that its relationship with a public.

## Identifying Publics

Good communication planning calls for the identification of a business's various publics. There is no such thing as a general public. Rather, each public is linked with the business in a unique relationship. There are four categories of publics and they include: customers, producers, enablers and limiters.

- **Customers:** The most obvious type of public may be customers who receive products or services of an organization. Such as current or potential consumers, purchasers, clients, students, patients, fans, patrons, shoppers, parishioners, members and so on.
- **Producers:** This category includes publics that provide input to the business. These include personnel such as employees, volunteers and unions. This also includes producers of the needed materials such as suppliers, and producers of the financial resources such as backers, donors and stockholders.
- **Enablers:** This category includes groups that serve as regulators by setting the norms or standards for the business, such as professional associations and government agencies. This also includes opinion leaders with influence over the potential customers, such as stockbrokers and analysts. Other groups include allies, which the organization may be able to work with on cooperative projects.
- **Limiters:** This category includes publics that in some way reduce or undermine the success of a business, such as competitors, opponents.

## Analyzing Publics

Having just identified the major categories of publics, the next step is to look at them in more detail. By more narrowly focusing our publics we can understand them better. For example a University starting a recruiting campaign can't just consider students as their public, that's too broad of a category. There are so many different kinds of potential students. You would want to narrow that down to high school graduates, adults seeking to upgrade their credentials, current students at competing Universities and so on.

You also want to eliminate from consideration groups that are not publics, having no present or potential future relationship with your business. For example, students would not be an ideal public for a luxury vehicle dealer. The best advice in dealing with groups that are not publics is don't deal with them at all. Don't waste time and

money trying to communicate with people who have no relevant relationship with your business and no interest in your products or services.

### **Selecting Key Publics**

Based on the information and insights about your various publics, select several that warrant particular attention. These become your key publics. While all your publics may be important in various situations, not all warrant your attention. This is the point in your planning process where you weed out the less important publics, concentrating instead on those few that have particular relevance to the success of your business.

### **Benefit Statement**

Conclude the analysis of your publics with a benefit statement that briefly indicates the benefit or advantage your product or service can offer this public. How can you help satisfy their needs or problems?

As an example, the benefit that a gourmet restaurant might offer eclectic eaters could be written as:

Gourmet Eatery serves unique dishes to satisfy the most eclectic tastebuds, guaranteed not to be found anywhere else in town.

### **Conclusion**

This concludes the audience research phase of the goal setting process. You should now have some clear insights about your business, your various publics and your relationship together.

# Goal Setting Part 3 — Establishing Goals And Objectives

This step is about looking inwards and deciding what you want to achieve. To better understand this step you need to understand the dual concepts of goals and objectives.

## Goals

A goal is a statement rooted in your business's mission or vision. Using every day language, a goal acknowledges what you want to achieve and how you hope to achieve it. A goal is stated in general terms and lacks any kind of measurement. The difference between goals and objectives can be summed up like this: "Goals provide the direction, while objectives pinpoint the destination."

Communication goals can be categorized as relating to three different types of management situations:

- Reputation management goals: These deal with identity and perception of your business.
- Relationship management goals: These focus on how the business connects with its publics.
- Task management goals: These are concerned with getting certain things done, such as driving sales or generating more leads.

Please bear in mind that it is unlikely, even unnecessary, that every campaign will have each type of goal. You can mix and match these however you deem appropriate for your specific campaign.

## Objectives

An objective is a statement derived from your business's goals. It is a clear and measurable statement, written to point the way towards particular levels of awareness, acceptance or action. An objective is a milestone that measures your progress towards a goal.

## Standards for Objectives

- Goal Rooted: Objectives are based on your business's overall goals. Objectives are responsive to a particular issue that your business has recognized as important to its success.
- Public Focused: Objectives are linked firmly to a particular public and are based on the wants, interests and needs of that public.
- Impact Oriented: Objectives are oriented toward the impact they can achieve. They define the effect you hope to make on your public, focusing not on the tools but the intended accomplishments.
- Linked To Research: Good objectives aren't just pulled out of thin air, they are tied to research. For example, if research shows that 40% of your key public is familiar with your business's products or services, your objective might be to increase that to 50%. Not because 50% is a magic number, but because it represents a reasonable ambition based on the current situation, as revealed through research.
- Explicit: Objectives are explicit and clearly defined. There is no room for misunderstanding. Don't use vague language like "educate, inform, promote or encourage." Instead, use strong action verbs to state your objective specifically. For example, one of our clients sells solar panels and they might be inclined to state an objective saying they want to "enhance knowledge of solar panel technology." A more explicit goal would be stated by saying they want to "increase residents' understanding of the benefits of solar panel technology by 25%."
- Measurable: Objectives are precise and quantifiable, with clear measures that state the degree of change being sought. Avoid vague language like "appropriate" or "reasonable." Instead, using solar panels as an example again, state that you want to "effect a 20% increase in use of solar panel technology over the next six months."

- **Time Definite:** Objectives include a clear definition of a timeframe. Such as January 1st, within six months, during Q4 and so on. Avoid vague language like “in the near future” or “as soon as possible”.
- **Singular:** Objectives focus on one desired response from one public. Don't state, for example, that you want to “increase awareness and generate sales.” You may be successful in the first effort but unsuccessful in the latter, making it difficult to evaluate your effectiveness. Most strategic plans will have multiple objectives, but each should be stated separately.
- **Challenging:** Objectives should stretch your business a bit and inspire people to take action. Don't aim at too safe a level of achievement or you might find that you haven't really achieved anything worthwhile. Set your sights high.
- **Attainable:** Though challenging, objectives also need to be attainable according to your business's needs and resources. It's not realistic to aim for 100% of anything. Don't set yourself up to fail by creating unattainable objectives.
- **Acceptable:** Objectives need to be understood and supported by your entire team. The value of objectives is not that they are written, but rather that they are used. They need the strength of your entire team in order to be useful.

### **Hierarchy of Elements**

There's an ordered hierarchy among communication objectives. They grow out of a logical progression through three steps of persuasion: awareness, acceptance and action. Awareness begins the process, increasing gradually. Interest then builds in stages and customer attitudes gradually change to find your business an acceptable choice. Then physical and verbal actions take place like purchasing and inquiring.

- **Awareness Objectives:** these focus on information, providing the thinking component of the message. These objectives specify what information you want your publics first to be exposed to and then to know, understand and remember. Awareness objectives particularly deal with message exposure, comprehension and retention. They are appropriate for transmitting purely functional information, communicating on noncontroversial issues, and during the early stages of any communication campaign. Awareness objectives are also useful for publicity and impacting what you know about a business and its products and services.
- **Acceptance Objectives:** These deal with the feeling part of the message; how people respond emotionally to the information they received. Acceptance objectives are useful in reinforcing existing interests and attitudes, and changing existing positive or negative attitudes. These are important in the midst of controversy and in persuasive situations. They impact how people feel about your business and its products and services.
- **Action Objectives:** These take aim at expression and conduct, providing the behavioural element of the message. These objectives offer two types of action: opinion (verbal action) and behaviour (physical action). Action objectives may attempt to create new behaviours or change existing ones, positively or negatively. They should be focused on your business's bottom line, such as customer buying, member retention, donor giving, fan attendance and so on. These objectives not only serve to suit the needs of your business, but they're also objectives for building consensus and enhancing the relationship between your business and its publics.

### **Defining Objectives**

In defining objectives, keep your language simple and brief. Avoid jargon. Use everyday language and strong action verbs. Objectives are not meant to be presented publicly, so don't worry if they begin to sound repetitive.

The guidelines we're about to go over will help you deal with each important element of a well-stated objective.

- **Public:** Indicate the public to whom the objective is addressed.
- **Category:** Indicate the category of objective: awareness, acceptance or action.
- **Direction:** Indicate the direction of movement you are seeking. That is, to create or generate something that did not exist before. To increase or maximize a condition, to maintain effects or reinforce current conditions, or to decrease or minimize something.
- **Specific Effect:** Indicate the specific effect that you will address. If you are writing an awareness objective, the specific effect should deal with receiving the message, understanding it and perhaps remembering it. If you are focusing on acceptance levels, deal with generating interest, reducing apathy or fostering attitudes. For action objectives, focus on evoking a particular opinion or drawing out a desired action.
- **Performance Measure:** Indicated the desired level of achievement in terms of measurement. Raw numbers or percentages usually do well here. The number you come up with should reflect baseline research and/or desired outcomes.
- **Time Period:** Indicate the desired timeframe, either within a single period or multiple stages. Here you can be specific (January 1st) or relative (within six months, at the end of the first quarter etc.)

Example Of A Perfectly Worded Objective:

To have an effect on the action of Espanola residents, specifically to generate leads through requests for consultation via website contact form (100 leads during the first two months of the campaign; 400 leads within six months)

# Differences Between Social Networks

There are many sites out there besides Facebook that allow people to connect with each other. In most cases these sites have slightly different goals, niches and communication styles than Facebook.

LinkedIn, for example, is a tool for connecting with people specifically for career networking. Instagram is an application specifically for sharing images. We know you'd like to understand the differences between every major social network, but it's a tough question to answer in one chapter of this workbook.

However, we will do our best to distinguish the major differences between Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Pinterest. Please bear in mind that these are generalizations and subject to varying opinions.

## **Facebook**

Facebook is a network to communicate with family, friends, colleagues, clients, prospects--basically anyone! Facebook was originally created as a way for college and university students to connect with each other. Facebook has since broken down the walls, so to speak, and now anyone is free to join. All kinds of people are using Facebook with widely different goals in mind.

Facebook's strength is in its ability to seamlessly share any kind of media. From videos to plain text, from images to website links, you can share it all on Facebook quickly and easily. Its built-in analytics system makes measuring everything a breeze, which is why it continues to be an extremely popular tool for businesses.

## **Twitter**

Twitter is a network that allows people to engage in instant sharing of short bursts of information. A Twitter post is very similar to a Facebook update in the sense that it allows for text, images videos and links. What differentiates Twitter from Facebook is its extremely simple user interface and single focus on real-time exchange of ideas.

Popular uses of Twitter are link sharing for interesting website content and news items, short opinions about current events and enabling large groups of people to communicate with each other about a specific topic through the use of hashtags.

## **LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is a network designed to help people connect primarily for business purposes. Profile pages are like virtual resumes; listing your skills, expertise and work experience. LinkedIn users are mostly business professionals looking to connect with others in their field, similar to what goes on at a networking event.

Other popular uses of LinkedIn include people networking for the purpose of getting a job, or upgrading from their current job. LinkedIn is also a popular place for recruiters looking to hand pick the best talent for their team.

## **Instagram**

Instagram is a network with a narrow focus on strictly sharing images. It does allow you to add text and comments, but images are king. It's purely smartphone-based, meaning that use of the network through a desktop or laptop computer is extremely limited. To use Instagram you must either have an iPhone or Android device with the application downloaded to it.

The idea behind this is that images shared are mostly intended to be from your phone's camera. This allows for real-time sharing of experiences, such as pictures from an event you're currently attending. It's also a great vehicle for businesses to tell a personal story through visuals.

## **Pinterest**

Pinterest is a network designed around sharing images in a scrapbook-like format. You can grab images you find from all over the web and share them on pinboards centred around a particular theme. You can connect with others to see images they're pinning, and re-pin them to your boards if you'd like.

For personal use, Pinterest is a fun way to express your personality and show off your interests. For business, Pinterest is a friendly way to show off your products, different uses of your products, and images that represent your company culture.

Pinterest is also an extremely powerful sales driver for e-commerce businesses because each image can act as a direct link to a sales page.

## **Conclusion**

This has been a brief introduction to five major social networks that have proven themselves as effective business drivers. There's only so much that can be covered in one chapter of this workbook, but from this you can make an informed decision about which network, or combination of networks, is right for your business.

Other networks, like Google Plus for example, are worth paying attention to but have yet to prove themselves as serious business tools. Don't feel pressured to be everywhere at once. Focus on what works for your business but keep an eye on new social networks and don't be afraid to adapt when they prove themselves to be valuable.

# Creating A Social Media Strategy

Many businesses on social media are navigating without a roadmap, so to speak. They make the unfortunate mistake of rushing into social media without any kind of strategy. How you start using social media has a lot to do with where you end up, and those businesses going in without a strategy end up with the results to reflect it.

We want to help you get started off the right way to ensure the best results in the future. We're going to walk you through how to develop a basic strategy and help you learn from other marketer's mistakes.

## Don't Jump In Right Away

Think about how many other things in business you wouldn't do without a bit of planning first. You wouldn't run a promotion without crunching the numbers, you wouldn't pay for advertising without thinking about where to put it and who's going to see it. You also shouldn't rush to get your business on social media without careful planning.

Sure, it's free and quick to set up, so it might not immediately seem like something you need to take seriously. But consider that it took plenty of time and money to build your reputation, and you could lose it in an instant if you do or say the wrong thing over social media. Now doesn't it sound like something that deserves to be taken seriously?

## Where To Start

If getting started with social media to you means setting up a Facebook page, then you're already getting way ahead of yourself. Setting up a Facebook page is called a social media tactic, and defining tactics is actually the fifth step in developing a strategy.

You have to start with knowing your audience, defining objectives, creating key messages, planning content and then you can engage on Facebook! There are still a few steps after that too. Let us break it down for you.

## Steps Of A Social Media Strategy

### Know Your Audience

#### Really know them

- Be specific:

- Create personas

- Identify key influencers, brand advocates and critics

#### Know where they spend their time

- What platforms are they using?

- What time are they online?

#### Know what they want to talk about

- What's important to them?

- What do they need help with?

- What would make them want to follow you?

### Define Clear Objectives

#### Why social media?

- Is this the right tool for what you want to accomplish?

- What do you hope to achieve through using social media

#### Create SMART goals

- What do you hope to accomplish?

- Raise awareness?

- Increase website traffic?

Generate leads?  
Increase customer loyalty?  
Improve sales?  
Grow new business relationships?  
etc.

#### Define KPIs

How will you measure your goals?  
What will determine your success?

#### How will you measure your strategy?

What tools will you use?  
Will you use free tools or invest in paid ones?

### **Create Key Messages**

What's the main message you want to communicate?

Create three key messages and one call to action.  
Stick to the message.

Identify your voice and tone.

Who's talking for your business?  
One person or many?  
What's your personality?

Understand your context

What are your competitors doing?  
How can you be unique?

### **Plan Your Content**

Create a content calendar

Know what's coming up and create content around it  
Plan for events, news releases, conferences etc.

Tell stories

Share real stories about real people who have been helped by your business

Plan time to respond

Schedule blocks of time throughout the day to check your feeds and respond to people.

### **Define Your Tactics**

What social networks will you use?

Which ones are most ideal for achieving your goals?

How will you communicate on each network?

To what extent will you use each network?

Will you use any third party tools for posting to each network?

### **Measure, Measure and Revise**

Measure the performance of your strategy

Measure against KPIs  
Measure against objectives  
Measure against previous strategies (if applicable)

Analyze what worked and what didn't

What worked and why?  
What didn't work well and how can it be improved?

What will you continue doing going forward?

What will you revise?

**Maintain A Balance**

Integrating social media into your overall business goals is paramount. But it's also important to keep in mind that social media marketing is a customer-centric engagement strategy.

Don't lose sight of building genuine relationships with customers because you were too focused on business objectives. Always maintain a balance between the two.

# Facebook Insights

Facebook insights are the best metrics available for measuring your Facebook performance. As long as you know how to read the data, that is. However, without knowing what the numbers mean the information isn't very useful to you.

Some people love Facebook insights, some obsesses over them and some just plain don't understand them. To help with that here is a quick guide on the various sections of the insights panel.

From Reach to Engaged Users, we'll help you make sense of Facebook Insights so you can use them to improve your Facebook marketing going forward.

## Locating the Insights Panel

When you go to your Facebook page you'll see the admin panel at the top.

Right smack in the middle of the admin panel is the insights section. Click on See All and you'll be taken to the full insights panel where you'll find all the sections we're about to describe.

## Facebook Insights Sections

### Friends Of Fans

Friends of fans make up all the people you have the potential to influence. This extended network is often in the hundreds of thousands, or even millions depending on how many likes your page has. All other metrics are just a fraction of this number.

### Impressions

Impressions represent the number of times people saw anything from your page in their newsfeed or ticker. This includes friends and non-friends.

### Reach

This is the number of people who received impressions. People typically see your content more than once, which makes this number lower than the total number of impressions. Reach is determined by Facebook's EdgeRank algorithm, which we will explain in detail later on.

### Post Impressions & Post Reach

Post impressions represents how many people have seen your posts in their newsfeed or ticker. While regular impression tracks all activity, this metric tracks just your posts. Just like post impressions tracks how many times your posts were seen, the Post Reach metric tracks how many people your posts reached.

### Engaged Users & Talking About This

Engaged Users represents how many people have clicked on one of your posts. People Talking About This tracks how many people have created a newsfeed story from your content by liking, sharing or commenting on something from your page. When their friends see these stories in their newsfeed it counts toward the reach and impressions metrics.

New likes also count toward People Talking About This because it creates a story for other people to see. Of all the people you have the potential to reach with your Facebook page, those who are talking about this are the small fraction of people who took some kind of action.

## Conclusion

Looking at the Facebook Insights panel may be daunting if you're new to managing Facebook pages, but knowing how to read the data is essential for measuring the performance of your Facebook marketing efforts.

# Tips For Attracting Likes And Engagement On Facebook

Research reveals that only 16% of your Facebook fans will see your posts on average. This low percentage shows that it's dangerous to assume that all updates are seen by everyone who likes your page.

Facebook has an algorithm called Edgerank that limits how many of your posts are seen by your fans. Edgerank also determines where and what posts appear on each individual's news feed. If Facebook didn't use this algorithm then people who like 100 or more pages would be flooded with 300-400 updates all day long.

Facebook uses three main factors to calculate Edgerank and determine who will receive your updates. They are as follows:

- **Affinity:** the measurement of the relationship between the user and the creator of the post. The closer the relationship, the higher the score.
- **Weight:** Different types of posts carry different weights. The greater the weight, the higher the score. They rank in the order of photos/videos, links, and plain text updates.
- **Time Decay:** As a post ages it continually loses value.

How Do You Improve Edgerank And Get Your Posts Seen By More People?

- **Keep it short.** Posts between 100 and 150 characters get 60% more likes, comments and shares than posts over 250 characters.
- **Be visual.** Posting photo albums, photos and videos get 180%, 120% and 100% more engagement respectively. (Instead of posting just a link, post a photo with the article title and URL in the caption. This almost always increases reach.)
- **Ask for what you want.** Asking simple, opinion-driven questions or fill-in-the-blank style questions will bring in 90% more engagement than the average post.
- **Post daily.** Remember that 96% of your fans aren't coming back to your page. Posting frequently is the only way to consistently reach them.
- **Be relevant, but not pushy.** Posts related to, but not directly about your business perform best. For example, if you're in the business of selling sporting goods your posts should be about seasonal sports and outdoor activities. Not politics, celebrities or what you're doing for lunch.
- **Be timely.** Try posting at different times to find the best time for your specific audience, then stick with them.

Facebook Ads are a great way to increase your audience on the social network and drive more engagement to your Facebook Page. There are many options offered to you through Facebook's Marketplace, but getting started can be a challenge.

# Facebook Advertising

## How to Create Ads

Creating a Facebook ad or Sponsored Story is easy. First, choose the Page you want to promote. Second, select “Create an ad” from the drop-down menu on that Page next to the Like button. Here you’ll be able to customize your ad as well as see a preview.



When writing your ad text, make sure to clearly explain what you’re advertising — the details of your product or service and special offers. We recommend that you use calls to action in your ad text and an eye-catching image that will look good when viewed in a small thumbnail size. Facebook offers several targeting options.

To simplify the process, it’s recommend that you create an outline of your ideal customer, including details such as location, age, gender, and interests. We recommend that you test multiple version of ads so you can determine what type your target audience responds best to.

## Types of Ads

Facebook educates members about advertising, but it does a poor job of explaining all of the options available for businesses. Because you don’t have direct support from Facebook, it’s important that you choose an option that best fits your marketing goal. To make sure that you’re not confused by any of the information you find through the self-serve tool, the following breakdown should help make things clear.

## External Website Ads

External Website, or Standard Ads, are Facebook’s traditional ad option. These ads are usually found along the right-hand side of the page and are designed to drive traffic offsite. The specs for this type of ad has actually decreased in size, going from 110x80 pixels and a 135 character limit to 99x72 pixels and 90 characters.

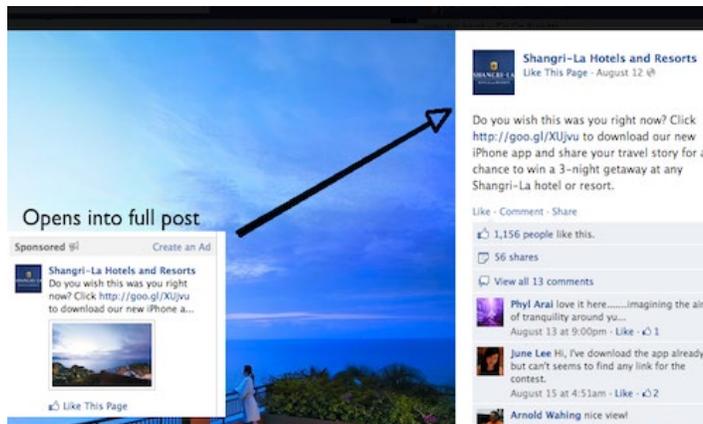
## Facebook Like Ads

Facebook Object, or Like Ads, are similar to external website ads, but are designed to drive traffic to a Facebook Page, App, or Event. These have the same specs as Standard Ads, except that titles will be the name of the Page, App, or Event you’re advertising.

A collage of various Facebook advertisements. On the left, a text-based ad from 'The Huffington Post' about high-frequency trading. In the middle, two image ads: one for 'Roast and Win' featuring a 'VAN HOUTTE' logo and another for 'Captain Morgan Canada' featuring a 'A DARKER' logo. On the right, three vertical ads: a 'WARNING \$7163' ad, a 'Want more free time?' ad with a person's photo, and a '\$99 Beats By Dr. Dre' ad. Below these are two more ads: a photo of a person and a 'Christina Aguilera' ad.

## Facebook Page Post Ads

Page Post Ads are primarily used to promote Pages and drive engagement. With these ads, you can take something you've added to your Facebook Page — whether it be a photo, link, video, event, question, or text update — and turn that content into an ad.



Non-fans who see the ad will have an opportunity to Like your Page directly from the ad. Existing fans will see a Sponsored Story that displays their friends who have already connected with your Page. Global brands, or Managed Accounts, that select this ad option will notice that fans can interact by Liking or commenting directly within the Sponsored Story.

Page Post Ads are found in the right-hand column and come with a 120 character limit. If the text from the original post runs over, the ad will be truncated and the full text will open upon clicking.

## Sponsored Stories

Sponsored Stories are the most interactive and organic of all the ad types. Because they highlight actions taken by fans on your Page, they're also the most complex option. First, let's take a look at the different types of actions you can turn into a Sponsored Story:



- Page Likes: Displays when a friend Likes your Page, and includes a thumbnail of your Page's profile picture and a Like button.
- Page Post Likes: Displays when a friend Likes a specific post from your Page, and includes that post.
- Page Post Comments: Displays when a friend leaves a comment on a specific post, and includes the comment as well as a link to that post.

- App Used/Game Played: Displays when a friend uses an app or plays a game, and includes a thumbnail of the app/game as well as an option to play.
- App Shared: Displays when a friend shares a story about your app — for example, adding a pin to Pinterest. It includes a thumbnail of the app as well as a description of the action.
- Check-Ins: Displays when a friend checks in at a location, and includes a thumbnail of his or her profile picture as well as the comment made upon check in.
- Domain: Displays when a friend Likes an item outside of Facebook, and includes a thumbnail of the Liked item and link to offsite destination.
- Question Answered: Displays when a friend has answered a question in a poll, and includes the results of the poll.
- Event Joined: Displays when a friend RSVPs to an event, and includes the thumbnail and link to the event.

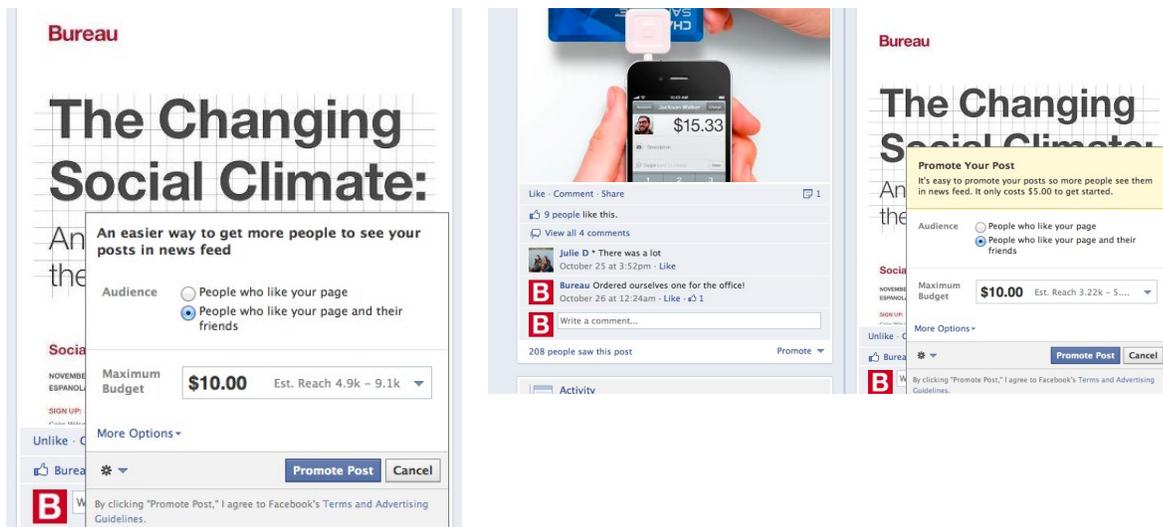
Unlike other ad types, you have a bit more control over where your Sponsored Stories are placed. For example, you can target mobile-only, desktop only, or just News Feeds. While other ad types limit you to one-way communication, Sponsored Stories are more conversational and encourage participation.

### Promoted Posts

If you'd like to bypass the somewhat complicated self-serve interface, you can easily create ads through the Promote Button.

Promoted Posts allow you promote anything you can create through the sharing tool: status updates, photos, videos, Offers, and questions.

These are ideal for mobile impressions since the ads appear in News Feeds and not the right-hand column. You can even purchase Promoted Posts directly from the Pages Manager app. However, this is only available to Pages with more than 400 Likes.



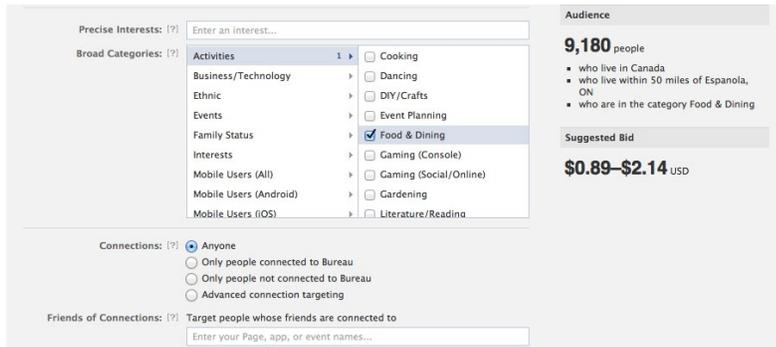
### Facebook Offers

Although not technically an advertising option, Facebook Offers allow local businesses to send discounts and promotions directly to customers, who can then print out the deal or redeem a code online. Offers are free to create, but have limited reach. If you'd like your Offer to run in News Feeds you will have to purchase a Page Post ad or choose to promote your Offer by using the Promote button.

Unless claimed or promoted, only your fans will see your Offer. Once an Offer has been claimed, that activity as well as Offer details will appear in that person's News Feed for friends to see.

### Facebook Ad Targeting

If you're looking for an effective way to increase your audience and drive more engagement to your Facebook page, Facebook ads are a great solution. However, before you start spending money on advertising you first have to define who your target audience is.



The Internet is noisy, and at one billion members strong Facebook is no exception. Everyone is competing for attention, which is why it's more important than ever to make your audience feel like you're talking specifically to them.

Before creating a Facebook ad it's recommended that you create an outline of your ideal customer including details like location, gender, interests and so on.

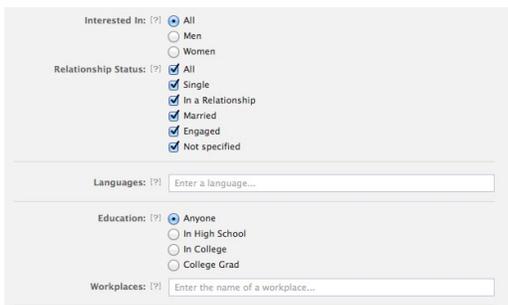
Once you know who you're going to target you can begin building a plan around how you will market to them. In this section of the presentation we will show you the most effective ways in which you can target your Facebook ads to reach your ideal customer.

### Demographic Targeting

Creating a target audience is a challenge. It's best to start big and narrow it down from there. First decide whether you will be marketing to a local, national or international audience. The country you live in will be selected by default, but you can manually add the names of others.

You can also focus on one (or more) province or city. If you choose cities you'll have the option to include additional cities within a 10-50 mile distance. If you want to get even more specific you can target by postal code, which is especially convenient for local businesses with a small number of physical locations.

From here you can narrow down your audience even further by selecting an age range, or you can check the box requiring an exact match. You can also target based on gender.



## Interest Targeting

Now it's time to make your ad more relevant. Keeping in line with the broad-to-narrow approach, Facebook has provided several umbrella categories for you to choose from, including Activities, Interests, Family Status, Mobile Users, and more.

Choose Your Audience Learn More About Targeting

Location: [?]    
  Country   
  State/Province   
  City   
    
  Include cities within  miles

Age: [?]  -   Require exact age match [?]

Gender: [?]  All   
  Men   
  Women

**Audience**  
**113,180** people  
• who live in Canada  
• who live within 50 miles of Espanola, ON

**Suggested Bid**  
**\$0.86-\$1.87** USD

These categories can be drilled down even further to fit your specific targeting criteria. For example, selecting Family Status will let you target people who are recently engaged/married, expecting a baby, and so on. Mobile Users (iOS) lets you target individuals based on which Apple devices they own, including the new iPhone 5.

These are still pretty big categories, even with all of the sub-channels. If you still want to get more targeted you can add Precise Interests, which allows you to type in a target. For example, if you selected Sports > Hockey from the broad categories you can focus on fans of a specific hockey team by typing it into the Precise box. Facebook will also generate related Likes and Interests for you to choose from.

## Connection Targeting

Although this is a small section, Connections will have a big impact on your Facebook ad's overall reach. This is where you determine if you'll be targeting existing fans or potential new ones. For example, if you're promoting an offer exclusively to new customers, you'll likely target people who aren't already connected to your business on Facebook.

## Advanced Targeting

Once you've finished targeting by connections you can click to view more advanced targeting options. They're called advanced targeting options but they're really just an extension of the demographics we covered already. Here you can target your ad based on relationship status and preference, languages, education level and workplace.

## Set Your Budget

After going through all the steps to target the audience for your ad, the only thing left to do is set your budget. You can set a lifetime budget, which means the ad will run continuously until the money runs out. Or you can set a daily budget, which means the ad will only run for a limited time each day according to the amount of money you set.

You can also choose to be charged based on number of clicks or number of impressions. If getting clicks is vital to the success of your ad, then chose that option. If you just want your ad to be seen by the most amount of people and aren't concerned with how many clicks it gets, then choose that option.

## Wrapping It Up

As you're building your ad, you'll be able to view the audience you're creating to the right of the screen. This gives you an idea if the intended audience is too big or too small.

Also, keep in mind that targeting isn't limited to just the settings. The language and tone you use in the ad's message also plays an important role in reaching the right audience.

We recommend that you test and track the effectiveness of several ads before locking yourself into just one area.

# Time Saving Tips For Social Media

How many times have you been stuck in meetings or running errands all day with no time to keep up with social media? On top of that you're also trying to gather information to do your job more effectively and struggling to keep up with industry trends.

Does all of this sound familiar to you? Truth is that's the reality for a lot of professionals using social media, but we manage to make it work through several time saving tips that we're going to share with you today.

## **Tip #1: Set Up An RSS Reader**

Get in the habit of following blogs through an RSS reader. For those unfamiliar, an RSS reader is a tool that lets you subscribe to blogs so that the content is delivered to you rather than you having to go to it. They're free, the most popular one is Google Reader

Subscribe to some prominent blogs in your industry and check your RSS reader daily to keep up with the latest news and expert advice. As you're going through the articles favourite the ones you feel are worth sharing by clicking on the star icon at the top. We'll be using those favoured articles next.

## **Tip #2: Schedule Posts In Advance**

One of the best ways to stay active on social media throughout the day without getting burned out is to schedule some posts in advance.

After you're done going through your RSS reader and have selected a few articles to share, schedule them! Facebook has an insanely simple scheduling tool built right into its user interface. If you use Twitter there's a great third party tool called Buffer that will post scheduled tweets for you.

Then these updates will be automatically shared throughout the day, so you can keep your followers engaged with interesting content even while you're busy doing other things.

## **Tip #3: Maximize Downtime**

Keep in mind that scheduled updates are no substitute for genuine conversation. Maximize your downtime by checking on your social accounts and having some back and forth communication with your audience.

There is a lot of time during the day that's wasted where you're forced to stand around and not be productive. Such as standing in line for coffee, at the bank, or waiting for meetings to start. This is all time that can be used for social networking.

When you find yourself in one of these situations pull out your smartphone and check in on Facebook and Twitter. Reply to comments, make some comments of your own, throw in a few retweets. You'll be surprised how much social media work you can get done on your downtime.

## **Tip #4: Make Use Of Twitter Lists**

Twitter lists have been around forever but there are so few businesses actually using them. After using Twitter for a while you'll find yourself following hundreds of accounts in no time. It can be overwhelming trying to keep up with them all, so take advantage of Twitter lists by organizing them into groups.

Instead of reading updates from everyone you follow you can check a list and just see tweets from people you have selected. This makes it easy to see updates from specific people without having to weed through everyone else's updates. You can even create a private list to keep an eye on your competitors without them knowing you're following them.

## **Conclusion**

Through the use of an RSS reader, scheduling updates in advance, maximizing downtime and using Twitter lists you can easily maintain an active social media presence using less than an hour of your time each day.