

Laura's Guide to **Facebook Fanpage** **Interaction and Growth**



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What this guide is not:

It is not a comprehensive guide to using all aspects of Facebook for business. It will however share some of the keys to being successful with Facebook, as well as help you to understand what you should post on your page that will help you interact with, and sell to, your fans. These keys may seem simple or obvious, and you may have heard them a hundred times before, but more than half of all pages I see don't follow some or all of this very basic advice. Even if you don't learn anything new, let this guide, which you have paid for, be the impetus for you to start taking action on this advice.

Let's start by looking at a couple of rules from Facebook:

1-Terms and Conditions:

Facebook has set up terms and conditions for not only using Facebook but using pages. These can change at any time and Facebook is not required to notify you of the changes (they should be, but they aren't). It's always your responsibility to make sure that what you're sharing, and how you're sharing it in some cases, is in accordance with their rules.

2-Promotions and Contests:

Facebook has recently changed the rules on contest or sweepstakes to make it much more doable for less tech savvy businesses. They now say you can do contests and sweepstakes on your page wall as well as through apps. Their rules are missing many of the fine print details they had before, but it means that as long as you establish clear rules for doing the contest, don't use a profile, and check in with their rules frequently, you have a pretty good chance of pleasing your fans with any contest you can dream up.

3-Pages and Profiles:

Don't have a profile for your business. Since Facebook created "Pages" they have outlawed the use of profiles for the primary purpose of making money. Is it wrong to invite your friends to become fans? No, because you're bringing the business conversation to the business page. Celebrating a particularly big success on your profile would be appropriate, like you may go get drinks with a friend to celebrate a big life event. But saying things to the effect of "buy my stuff" isn't allowed on profiles where you have "friends." The only place you should promote

your business is on a page, and you should only create business page for your business, not a community page.

Those are Facebook's rules. Here are mine:

1-Sales and Being Social:

The first and most important thing to remember is that Facebook is a *social* platform. It is not primarily a marketing tool, but rather a place to connect with your fans and customers and secondly share your brand/products with them.

2-People are Fans:

The second thing you need to remember is that these are people you're talking with (or attempting to talk to), not bots. They deserve courtesy, respect, proper language, and friendliness from you. I'll share some more specifics on this when we get to talking about actually posting on your page, but the thing to understand is that how you say something on your page is just as important as what you're sharing.

More fans and customers are expecting better customer service from businesses these days, and your page is a part of your customer service. Of course there are some brands who are built on being rude, crude, off the wall or with certain language, and with those brands it's expected, and would be appropriate on the page to an extent. For the rest of us, being rude, short, ignorant or hateful isn't good Facebook use.

3-What Should I Share?

Posting all of the same content will bore your fans and they will stop commenting on your posts and may even unlike your page. You need to share a variety of content, which we will discuss later. The only exception is if your plan for using the page and company/brand includes posting the same content, but this only works well for a very small percentage of businesses.

4-Other Social Networks:

Don't have your Facebook updated by any other social network (Twitter, Google plus, Pinterest, YouTube etc.), and don't have your Facebook update any other network. They are all different social networks, and while some of the same content can be shared on any/all networks, the exact same post should not be directly sent to any of them. By sharing the same exact content on multiple platforms you're reducing the number of people who will follow etc. you on other

platforms. Why would someone want to read the same thing twice? Can you repurpose content, to an extent, yes; but it should be shared in a way that's appropriate for the network.

5-Traffic:

Have a link on your website to your Facebook page. Depending on Facebook to deliver all of the fans and traffic to your page is like expecting the clouds to be the only thing that deliver water to the plants in your garden. Facebook has no responsibility to deliver people who may want to be fans to your page (unless you pay them to), but you do have a responsibility to get people to your page if you want fans.

You can also include a link to your Facebook page on your blog, in your newsletter, in a physical location (i.e. store), and/or in your email correspondence. The point is you want to make it as easy as possible for people to find you, take the guesswork out of whether or not you have a page, and provide as many opportunities as possible to connect with your customers and potential customers.

6-Get Connected:

Comment on other pages with your page at least 3 days a week. Just like with your personal profile where you can talk with and comment on friend's statuses, you can comment on other pages with your page. When your page is the active account you can go to another page and click the "like" button. This page that you just "liked" will show up in your newsfeed when you click the Facebook icon in the top left.

The only way to have a truly authentic page (beside posting original content) is by interacting with other pages on Facebook. Just spending 10 minutes a day perusing some of the pages you've liked is enough, if you have the ability to do more, you can (no more than 30 a day unless you're a very large page (10,000+ fans)).

The pages you like should not be pages you personally like, but pages that your business should interact with, like those in the same industry, complimentary businesses, as well as other businesses local to you (if relevant).

Commenting on their pages does not mean that you should spam them and direct their fans back to your site to buy from you. It means commenting on their posts just like you would comment on something a friend said. By commenting on what they've written you're improving your rating with Facebook and creating opportunities for potential new fans to meet you.

7-Your “About” Page:

Fill out the “about” page. This page is free marketing space for you to tell the world about your business. You should list your website and other contact information here, as well as personally tell fans about your page. This isn’t a place to word-for-word copy from your website or business’s brochure, this is a place for you to tell your fans, potential fans and potential clients about your business as if you were talking to a friend. It should have 2-4 paragraphs of information including what you sell, why people should “like” you and why you matter.

8-Getting Likes:

There is no magic bullet for getting a huge number of *real*likes. With the exception of some of the company pages like Coke or Victoria’s Secret, most pages with large numbers of likes have fake likes. People are naturally skeptical of a company with a large number of likes that does not seem like it should have that many likes naturally (a little ice cream shop in a no-name town in Montana with 10,000 likes almost definitely has fake likes).

The number of fans you have isn’t what’s ultimately important. What matters is how interactive your fans are. It’s better to have 100 fans and have 75 of them regularly participating in the discussion than 10,000 fans and 100 who participate. The more fans who participate, the more likely it is that your posts will be seen by others due to Facebook’s algorithms. And when others who aren’t fans see your posts, they hopefully will be interested by them enough to come and “like” your page, thus getting you new fans. Sharing relevant, regular content as well as commenting on other pages and having your Facebook link on your website will all help you get more fans. If you aren’t posting anything relevant, or aren’t posting frequently potential fans won’t have any reason to “like” your page.

Some companies have seen success using even minimal amounts of “promoted posts” and paid advertisements. It’s certainly something to try for a short period of time after you’ve established some good content on your page on a regular basis.

9-Who Sees What:

Facebook has told us that approximately 16% of your fans see your posts at any given time. This is because Facebook uses an algorithm to somehow determine what posts should and shouldn’t be seen by your fans, much like how Google ranks search results. If you want people who follow you to see all your posts in their newsfeed, go on Twitter (Twitter doesn’t use an algorithm).

For Facebook, this means that you should, just like with any other marketing tool, not solely depend on Facebook to deliver sales and traffic to your business. To get better results on your

posts, post relevant, interesting, respectful content on a regular basis. Fans don't have anything to like, comment on or share if you don't post anything!

10-Sales Pitches:

Depending on what social media expert you talk to, somewhere between 75 and 90% of your posts should be content or information, not sales, based. That means an absolute maximum of 25% of the time you should be posting promotional things. If the only thing you're posting are sales pitches, fans will tune you out. Also with news or blog sites, just posting articles or blog posts is the equivalent of posting all sales pitches.

11-The 3 (Realistic) Goals with Facebook:

The goal with Facebook is to first and foremost connect with people who are or could be customers. The second goal you should have is building brand recognition. Finally, your third goal should be converting people into customers/readers.

Back at the beginning of this section I discussed how important it was to recognize that this is a social network, thus your first goal must be to be social. You can use Facebook for traditional customer service of answering FAQ's, as well as getting feedback and discovering what your fans like and are interested in.

The second part of using Facebook should be you sharing, developing and spreading your brand. Since Facebook is social, it's a great place to share who you are, what you're passionate about, how people can get involved, how you care about the community or a special cause, what you stand for, and/or create a community around what you stand for (aka your brand).

Finally, when people are part of your brand, they take it to the next level and become customers or refer customers to you.

In summary...

If you don't understand or follow the above rules, you'll most likely be wasting your time on Facebook. Facebook is not and should not be your only marketing channel. You should not spend 30 hours a week on it. You need to respect your fans. Do what you can to get fans from Facebook's hit-or-miss marketing into a dependable channel like a newsletter or blog subscription. To an extent you will get from it what you put into it. If you don't reach out to other pages or post relevant content on your page you won't have much, if any, success.

Tips for posting on your page's wall:

1-Plan Ahead:

I suggest planning your Facebook posts weekly, monthly or even yearly. By writing as many as you can ahead of time, you'll only have to be on Facebook 10-15 minutes or so a day to post and reply to any postings from your fans and interact with other companies. With the scheduling feature on Facebook itself, you can pre-schedule your posts weekly or monthly and just focus on the daily interaction with fans and other pages (look beneath where you enter your updates for a little clock icon).

2-How Often to Post:

Try to post once per day, and don't do more than 15-21 per week if possible. If you're posting once per day you're actually posting more frequently than 90% of the pages and people on Facebook. Facebook isn't as "quick" as Twitter and you don't need to post nearly as often to reach the same, if not a greater, number of people. Normal is 7-10 per week. Think quality not quantity.

If fans see your posts many times throughout their timeline they're likely to ignore or unlike your page. You want your fans to anticipate your posts, not be angered by them. Some businesses will choose to share more than 21 posts, for example CNN with regular news plus breaking news, but in that case I would make a separate page where fans would agree to get many posts, rather than inundating all of your fans with many posts (make a separate page for breaking news, keep the regular news on the main page). In the rest of this report I'll base my numbers on posting 1 post each day (you can do the math if you plan to post more often).

3-How Long Should Posts Be?

Try to keep the posts between 1 and 3 sentences long. If they're too long people won't read them, which means they won't "like" them or comment on them. If they're too short you're probably missing out on an opportunity to connect with or really share an idea with your fans.

4-What should I Share (Part 2)?

If you wouldn't share it in real life or tell a friend about it, it certainly doesn't belong on your page. This goes back to what I said earlier about being respectful of your fans. You are a representative for your business on Facebook, what you share here directly reflects on your company. By not being respectful and clearly communicating with your fans you're actually hurting your chance of getting sales through Facebook.

5-What's Relevant?

Post a variety of relevant content. If you're a technology business don't post about McDonalds, unless it's relevant. If you're a dentist, don't share jewelry and accessories, unless it's relevant. Don't worry, there's more about this later.

6-Take a Vacation:

Be friendly! Remembering that the primary purpose of Facebook is to be social together, it's good to occasionally leave the "office" and say something not business related. Like wishing your fans Happy Holidays or asking them about summer plans. Remember: behind each and every page and profile on Facebook there is a person, and no person can eat, sleep and live business.

7-Posting Videos, Blog Posts and Articles (and Pictures):

Don't just post links to videos, blog posts or articles. **Always** introduce them or share a caption about them. Links don't mean anything without context. When you share a blog post, article or video, don't share just the link, you should share the topic/title, a sentence about it so your fans know why you're sharing it/why it's relevant to them /what they'll get out of it by clicking it, a link to it so they can read it. As well, you should consider asking a question about the article to engage your fans.

For example, you may be sharing a delicious dinner recipe with your fans, but if you say something like "Pasta for dinner <link>" or "<link>" you'll get far less attention than if you were to share something like "Be done with boring pasta! Make this delicious Penne dish with pepper, squash, mushrooms and cheese sauce that will appeal to your whole family tonight! <link> " Which one would you rather click the link for?

Also on this topic, for pictures you should always include a caption with the picture, or ask your fans to give the picture a caption.

What and when to post on your page's wall:

1-Types of Things to Post:

You can post: tips, questions, articles, pictures, videos, quotes, and resources about your product/services. Not all of these work for every business, but most should work for yours. It may take some time to figure out what posts your fans respond to best. But just posting one type of post isn't going to get you the results that posting a variety of them would.

2-What Should My Business Post?

To figure out what to share for those post types in #1, think about your services. If you're a marketing firm that does social media and SEO work, you can talk about marketing, social media and SEO each week. If you're a family-friendly restaurant, you can share about food, family and fun each week. If you provide health services, you can talk about health, fitness, and nutrition.

There is no magic bullet for each and every business, as each business is different! You may share marketing tips, while a similar business may share marketing articles; there are many variables to consider, including your ideal customers and your brand. Don't feel frustrated if you can't figure it out, some of the biggest brands struggle too (whether you see it or not).

3-Best Time to Post:

The best time to post is different for each business. Some businesses have success posting in the mornings, others have success in the evenings. You have to do trial and error to figure this out, and it may (will) change over time for your business.

4-Posting Schedule:

I suggest you post each post on the same day each week. If you share your services or products on Thursday this week, for example, be consistent and always post about your services or products on Thursdays. It gives your fans something to look forward to, but more important, keeps you structured on what you're posting, and planning your posts.

5-Posting Balance:

If you're sharing one post per day, I suggest that 1-2 days a week you share sales/promotional related posts. The other 5-6 days you should be sharing relevant or friendly content. No one likes to be sold to incessantly.

6-Sales and Promotional Posts:

The sales and promotional posts can include pictures of your products, links to your website, as well as special deals and sales that you're offering to fans. Each post should include a sentence or two about the item, even a well-known item like the iPhone will need a description or introduction, because you have to tell your fans what version it is, how much it is, and what's included in your offer.

As I mentioned before, if you're doing contests, you have to use a contest app.

7-Posting Questions:

At least 2 posts a week should be, or include, questions. They can be questions about articles or insights, or just questions by themselves. The best way to get fans to talk back to you is to ask questions. You can ask them a question to get a response, as well as ask fans to like/share your posts.

8-Share Variety:

With the exception of questions, don't share more than 2 of the same thing in a week. For example, don't share more than 2 videos, 2 blog posts/articles, 2 promotions, 2 pictures, 2 quotes, or 2 tips. If you're sharing 3 blog posts/articles a week you're not going to share the variety of content that your variety of fans will respond to.

9-Go Local:

If you're a brick-and-mortar store, or target a specific location, you can take advantage of that by talking about other things going on locally, as well as connecting with other local businesses that would have your ideal fans.

In summary:

- 1-Check regularly, and follow, Facebook's rules
- 2-Post a variety of content on your page, including (but not exclusively) sales related information
- 3-Regularly connect with other businesses and people and comment on their pages
- 4-*Don't* have Facebook update or be updated by any other social network, *do* have a link to your Facebook page on your website.
- 5-Most important: be social!

Hopefully this will help improve your experience with Facebook for your business. If you don't think this guide was helpful, message me your page link and I'll tell you exactly what areas you're not doing well in.

If you would like personalized help knowing what you should post on your page to best engage your fans, you can buy a "gig extra" and have me create the plan for what, when and how to post on your Facebook page's wall. I've helped over 2000 pages thus far!

Happy Posting!