

FACEBOOK STRATEGY

Facebook is a great platform for reaching and engaging with new followers. However, it's both competitive and constantly changing. Here are some key issues that you should consider in order to get the best from your Facebook activities.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

It's critical that you constantly remind yourself of Facebook's own mission. They want to deliver HIGH QUALITY INFORMATION that is RELEVANT to their users' interests. So, if you want more of your potential customers to see your posts you MUST be clear about who you are trying to reach and what their interests are. Create and maintain a checklist of the attributes you think are most relevant to your target audience – their interests, their demographic distribution, the celebrities they follow, the publications/websites they follow etc. The more detail you can determine the better equipped you are to reach them.

Use the 'Targetting Worksheet' at the end of this section to list attributes of your customers. Not every item will be relevant but complete all the sections that are and review it regularly. This worksheet will help you identify content for your Facebook posts but it also matches up with Facebook's advertising platform so will be invaluable when you begin using adverts.

FOCUS ON QUALITY POSTS

Everybody has a strategy. You'll hear one person champion the idea of posting 4-5 times a day. Others will say always post on Wednesday evenings, or Sunday mornings. There is an almost endless list of so-called 'strategies' for getting more likes and followers. The reality is that there are too many variables to guarantee that any of these very specific strategies will work for you. You must explore and try out different types of posts until you find a strategy that works. But there is one over-riding requirement: **QUALITY**. And in this context that means text, images and video that match your audience's attributes.

SUBJECTS: stick to the subjects your audience are interested in

FOR TEXT: use the words and phrases that your audience uses

QUESTIONS: look at what questions are being asked over and over – then use those same questions in your posts, or offer words of wisdom that help unpick those questions

TOPICAL: stay ahead of the game by maintaining a list of upcoming dates, events, celebrations etc that you know your audience will be interested in. Post about them early rather than after everyone else. Share and comment on news items if you think your audience will like them.

IMAGES: use images that either convey your key messages OR are striking and stand out. An image has two purposes – firstly it stops people as they scroll past your post and secondly it gives an ‘instant’ impression of what your post is about. It can fulfil one or both of those purposes.

VIDEO: so-called ‘shortform’ video clips are all the rage so set yourself up to be able to produce them, whether it be your mobile phone, a PC or a simple ‘studio’ camera setup in your office. Videos take time to produce, but they don’t have to be fancy and they are worth the effort.

SHARED CONTENT: share posts from others on your timeline or in your group. This is especially true of sharing posts from people you know your audience follows. Sharing not only serves your audience with valuable content but shows others (and Facebook) that you care about your community. With time and momentum this will very likely result in other people sharing your posts, and Facebook delivering your posts to a wider audience.

USE FACEBOOK TOOLS

Facebook WANT you to succeed. Honestly, they really do! And they spend a great deal of money and effort trying to identify quality content from knowledgeable and passionate providers. That's why they are always introducing and trialling new tools that you can use to reach more people. This can often feel overwhelming, but it will help you greatly to keep abreast of these tools and set aside time to learn how to use them, then give them a try. For example:

1. **Polls/Events/Checkins** – these variations on basic posts allow you to mix things up a little and/or focus on specific things.
2. **Event Pages** – if you're running an event, workshop or retreat, set up an event page WITHIN Facebook and post to that page as well as your timeline.
3. **Facebook Live** – the ability to instantly start recording from your laptop or phone and record a message, a conversation or whatever may be going on around you. It's quick and dirty but it's also spontaneous, dynamic and engaging. Once you get over the fear, you'll be doing them with ease.
4. **Watch parties** – the ability to share a video within a group so that everyone engages at the same time. Once again this is about creating a buzz that brings people together.
5. **Boosts** – a simple method for distributing your posts to a wider audience. Yes, you will be paying for this service but Facebook will make more effort to deliver your content to people it thinks will like them.
6. **Targeted Advertising** - this is a more sophisticated version of Boosts in that you can request your posts to be delivered to people with specific interests (ie: the ones from your list above!)

ENGAGE WITH YOUR FOLLOWERS

If you don't engage with your followers then why should Facebook send your posts to others? Make sure you have a daily routine of checking your posts and engaging where possible:

- Like comments that people leave
- Reply to comments people leave
- Leave comments yourself with additional information or words of gratitude
- Tag friends who you think will like your post, maybe with a short comment inviting them to reply
- Like and comment with thanks to anyone who shares your posts

MIX UP YOUR ACTION CALLS & OFFERS

Of course social media isn't just about gaining likes and followers. Somewhere along the way you need to make money, either by inviting people to join your mailing list or by clicking on an offer or sales page on your website. Be weary of doing too much of this 'commercial' posting. Remember Facebook are always watching – if all you ever do is try to send people somewhere else, Facebook will downgrade your posts.

- Mix information, wisdom, questions and action calls throughout the week. DON'T put an external link in every post.
- Use a Facebook event page to get people registering interest for an event, rather than sending them directly to your website. You always do that from the event page once they reach it.
- Pay for boosts or advertising from time to time. By supporting Facebook financially you're demonstrating your commitment to the platform. Common sense says that will improve your ranking of other posts. You can boost the occasional post (especially ones that have already been quite successful) or run a low-level ad campaign in the background, maybe a few pounds/dollars a week. There is a significant advantage in running boosts and adverts over a long period since Facebook will be able to measure and refine the people they send your advert too. The longer it runs, the more accurate the targeting, which should mean increasingly better results.

FOLLOW, WATCH, LISTEN – STALK YOUR COMPETITORS!

You'll learn huge amounts from following others like yourself and seeing what they do with their audience. Get into the habit of researching people you admire or who serve similar people. How often do they post? What kinds of content get the most likes and comments? Do they do something unique that makes them stand out? And, of course, you can always choose to share some of their posts yourself.

You can also join other Facebook Groups and post as an individual and, in some cases, promote yourself and your own pages. Search for groups with similar or complementary interests, check their rules and then request to join. Once you are granted access, take a look at what others are doing. You may be able to post and find new friends, or promote products, services, websites, events etc. every group will have its own rules. It's a time-consuming process but may be worth exploring.

NOW IT'S TIME TO START PLANNING.

Now take a few sheets of paper or a workbook and start jotting down ideas for posts. Use resources like pixabay.com to find images you can use that are royalty free (don't just grab images from anywhere!)

FACEBOOK TARGETTING WORKSHEET

Name / Project:		Give your campaign a name
Facebook Biz Page(s) and/or Group(s):		Where do you want prospects to go?
Website:		
Summary:		Add a brief summary of the purpose of the campaign

AGE	Range		Ideal age of your clients?
GENDER	M / F		Male or Female or both?
LOCATION(S)	Countries, Regions, Cities		Note any regional targets (eg: London + 25miles radius)
RELATIONSHIP STATUS	S / E / M / D		Does marital status matter?
HOME OWNERSHIP	YES / NO		
JOB TITLE (S)			Possible jobs your audience may have
COMPETITORS	Name / Brand / Website		List any well known authors, teachers, gurus or experts your audience may follow
INFLUENCERS	Name / Brand / Website		List social media influencers that your audience link to or like (ideally with +500k followers)
ORGANISATIONS	Name / Brand / Website		Are your followers likely to be members of specific organisations or groups?
TRADESHOWS	Name / Brand / Website		Do your followers go to specific events or shows in your industry?
MAGAZINES	Name / Brand / Website		What magazines do your audience read?
FB FOLLOWS	Name / Brand / Website		Do your followers follow any other kinds of Facebook content or providers?
STORES/SUPPLIERS	Name / Brand / Website		Where do your followers shop (both online and offline)?
SOFTWARE/APPS	Name / Brand / Website		What software / apps do your followers use?
SEARCH TERMS	Words and phrases		Interests, activities, subjects that your followers may be connected with. Facebook's targetting system will help you narrow these terms down.