



How to Use your Facebook Pages

Technology with Integrity

By Tim Torian, Torian Group, Inc.

You have your shiny new Facebook page created, and are sitting in front of your computer ready to post. Now what?

I recommend having multiple Facebook pages: a personal page devoted to business contacts, one or more business pages, and participating in or creating appropriate group pages. Each business page should address a specific audience, whom you feel will be glad to hear from your business. Groups give you an opportunity to show your skills and help others, making you an expert in your field.

Your Facebook Personal Profile

Your personal profile (for business use, you may have other uses) should be focused on extending your network. You can stay in touch with more people more efficiently by adding social media to your toolset. People tend to do business with people they know and like. This is another communication channel, along with in person networking activities. All of your business networking skills can be easily extended to social media.

Follow up with an initial meeting by inviting the person to be your “friend” on Facebook, or connect on LinkedIn.

Just as you would with an in-person business introduction, take a moment to learn about new people you meet on Facebook. Networking always works best when there is a two-way exchange. If you can help a new Facebook friend, they will likely want to return the favor. Stay in touch. Respond occasionally to their posts, as appropriate. There is something about sharing a personal or humorous photo that can create an instant bond with others. Calendar in follow up messages – use social media management tools (see below). Set up a message for their birthday. Personal connections have the potential to become new business opportunities.

Leverage your profile

Use the “About Me” section to describe your business and what you do. In the “Information” box on your main profile page, you can feature links to your website, blog and other business resources. Be sure to include your photo so that others can recognize you online. Review security settings, and be liberal in sharing your basic information with the public so you can be found easily.

Build Your Contact List

Your Facebook personal page is based on the concept of connecting with friends. You can send and receive friend requests and once accepted, your friend can view your profile and you can view theirs. To begin connecting with people that you know, you can either import your contact database or you can search Facebook for individual people.

You can also view the friends list for each person you are connected to. As an example, once you

have accepted a friend request from your peer, Mary, you can view her list of friends. If you know any of Mary's friends (or you would like to know them), send a connection request.

Communicate with Wall Posts

Each Facebook member has a "wall" where friends can post messages. This is a great place to post a quick note to those in your friends list. In the business networking world, this is the online equivalent of picking up the phone to say hello.

For example, if you are connected to a CEO who you saw at an event recently, you could post a note on her wall that says, "Loved your presentation at the XYZ event – thanks for the great ideas!" These posts can be visible to all of their friends (depending on their security settings), extending your reach. Make use of photos and links. Most smart phones will automatically post pictures to Facebook, making it very quick and easy.

Update Your Status

At the top of your Facebook home page is a status box. When you post a status update, everyone in your friends list can see your update on their home page. Make sure your status is going to be interesting to all those who accepted you as a friend. Attending a seminar or having a baby may be of interest – what you had for breakfast may not. Be careful that apps or games you sign up for are not updating your status unnecessarily.

Your Facebook Business Page

Facebook business pages have "fans" rather than friends. They become a fan by "liking" your page. Business pages are public, and they often show up in Google searches. Each business page is managed by one or more administrators. Each administrator has a personal Facebook page. You manage your business page from your personal page. Like your personal page, business pages can be enhanced with apps, including events, custom pages, and much more.

Create your Page

To create a business page, search Facebook for "Create Page". If you have an address, you want to create a Local Business or Place. See www.toriangroup.com/socialmedia for detailed instructions on creating a business page.

Set Goals

Give some thought to your business goals for having a page, and post accordingly.

Some common goals are:

- Extend your brand - reach more people by being online.
- Strengthen your existing customer community, and keep your business in their awareness.
- Advertise specials and promotions.
- Drive traffic to your website. Be more visible on the internet.
- Provide customer support, and an opportunity for feedback.

Be as specific as possible – like any other project, your return will be directly proportional to how clear you are on the desired result.

Create a schedule for managing your pages, and get set up with social media management tools that allow you to manage it all in one place.

Send your Message

You have the ability to send messages to all of your fans, allowing you to cultivate a community online. When someone becomes a fan, they are granting you permission to send them information about your business. They are extending trust that your message will be interesting to them. You do this by posting on the wall of your business page – your posts also appear on your personal page as updates. Depending on security, this can be visible to their friends as well. One of the biggest benefits that Facebook provide the business community is the ability to get repeat exposure with the people in your network. Clients, peers, and prospects can make up your network, and you can promote events, sales, special offers and more through your Facebook page.

You can also turn fans into enemies if you send them messages that waste their time.

Understand your audience, and act on any feedback to improve your targeting. Often the most effective posts are informational updates on your industry, or tips on using your product or service that add value for your fans.

Get more Fans

Be sure to take full advantage of the space for custom graphics, and get a professional looking banner made for your business page that matches your branding and website. Create an incentive for people to like your page, by having a page that non-fans see with your offer. Once they become fans, they will see a different page, such as your wall. Your offer tells people why they should become a fan. Tie this to your business goals. Often quality is more important than quantity. Make your incentive relevant – attract the right fans that match your business goals for Facebook.

Depending on your business you may want multiple business pages. The goal is to target a very specific group with information that they will be glad to receive, and build a community around a shared interest.

Facebook ads are a good value if it fits your business model. You can pay by the number of people that view your ad, or by the number of people that click on it. Ads can be very narrowly targeted, such as women over 40 in your town.

Monitor your page

I recommend leaving your business page open for others to post, and monitoring it closely. You can get an email alert when someone posts on your page. This gives you a chance to let your customers or client interact with you and each other, which builds your community, and may give you valuable feedback on your business.

You can remove unwanted posts, and respond to inaccurate or critical posts. This ability to interact is what makes social media a unique business tool.

Measure results

Facebook has excellent tools to help you see who is coming to your page and from where - Facebook Insights – view insights on the right of your business page. Start with your business goals, and determine what to monitor to measure your success. Use this information to refine your strategy and improve your messages.

Also take advantage of Facebook ad creation tools. They provide free demographic information on keywords being used on Facebook, and can help you refine your message so your page shows up in searches.

Create or Participate in Communities or Brand pages

Community pages allow you to network virtually with potential clients and peers. They are created and managed like a business page. You can also search for pages to find topics related to your industry. For example, if you own an office supply store in Sacramento, you might search for general business groups based in Sacramento. If you are an auto parts dealer, you might become a fan of the Honda Civic owners page along with other auto-related pages. You can then post, and position yourself as a helpful expert in the field.

If you really want to maximize the potential with Community or Brand pages, consider starting one of your own. Once again, there is no cost to do this and the visibility can be great. For example, if you are a business broker in Dallas, you could start a Community page for Dallas business owners. You do not need to promote your business at every turn. Instead, make it known that you're a broker, but provide value for members by sharing interesting tips and engaging with them in the online forum.

Manage Your Time

The biggest complaint most have about social networking is that it takes a lot time to manage. I recommend designating time in your day for Facebook activities. You can login once or twice a day to view messages and manage your connections. Start small, and see what works for you. There are some excellent tools that allow you to monitor and post to multiple social media platforms at once. All those listed have free versions. I suggest trying them all, and see what suites you.

Hootsuite: www.hootsuite.com - includes a pro version for teams with multiple people managing postings. Allows scheduling of updates/postings.

Seismic: www.seismic.com – integrates with Salesforce. Web, mobile and desktop. Supports plugins and links to over 90 other platforms.

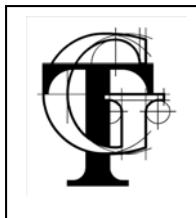
Yoono: www.yoono.com – wide social media platform support, with desktop and mobile versions.

Tweetdeck: www.tweetdeck.com – Recently purchased by Twitter but works with all major social media websites.

Additional tools and resources can be found at www.toriangroup.com/socialmedia.

The more time you spend on Facebook, the more ways you will find to use it to your advantage. Be creative, show your personality and have some fun.

About the Author



Tim Torian has his degree in Computer Science, and has been consulting on computer networking for the past 30 Years. He is a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer, and a Cisco CCNA and CCNI. He has taught computer networking at the College of Sequoias and Cal Poly Extension. He was awarded “Entrepreneur of the year” by the Tulare County EDC in 2008. Torian Group was awarded “Technology Business of the Year” by the SBDC in 2011. He is president of Torian Group, Inc. which provides a full range of Technology Consulting services to