

PART 6: HARNESS THE POWER OF FACEBOOK

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SMALL BUSINESS

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OVERVIEW

Facebook is the fastest growing social network in the world with more than 100 million active members. Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. Anyone can sign up for Facebook and interact with the people they know in a trusted environment.

In the first half of 2008, Facebook saw significant growth globally. As in the United States, it has become one of the largest Web sites in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and throughout Europe. It is also growing rapidly in Latin America and Asia.

Facebook is now available in 15 languages, including Spanish, French, and German, and it continues to grow and add functionality that is appealing to businesses of all sizes. In this section, we will share ideas and approaches to help you get started.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Facebook recognizes that engaging with businesses and buying things are a part of everyday life. With that in mind, it has created a system where ads are more relevant and actually enhance, instead of interrupt, the user experience. This is achieved, in part, through a feature called the "News Feed," which enables peer recommendations and activity to be subtly branded and spread from one person to all of his or her friends, to all of their friends, and so on.

This type of marketer-friendly functionality, coupled with the fact that many of your customers and prospects may already be on Facebook, make it an attractive tool for businesses.

GETTING STARTED

Facebook offers several different solutions for businesses:

- **Facebook Pages** – Every Facebook Page is a unique presence where users can become more deeply connected with your business or brand. Users can show their support by adding themselves as a fan, writing on your "Wall," uploading photos and joining other fans in discussion groups. You can send updates to your fans regularly – or just contact them with special news or offers. Facebook does not charge businesses a fee to create a page.
- **Facebook Platform** – Facebook Platform provides you with tools to quickly create custom experiences for users to interact with your business through videos, reviews, games, flash content and more while maintaining the look and feel of the Facebook interface. These applications are a great way to enhance your Facebook Page, and again, Facebook doesn't charge a fee for this. You are free to add custom business applications that already run on Facebook Platform, or pool the necessary resources to develop your own application.

Like Facebook Pages, applications built on Facebook Platform pay off when your fans interact with them, and the actions they take are automatically generated into "social stories." These stories are published to the News Feed, which friends may see the next time they log into Facebook. The stories link back to your Facebook Page, inviting more people to interact with it, which generates more social stories and drives even more traffic to your Page. It's word-of-mouth marketing at its most powerful.

GETTING STARTED (continued)

- [Facebook Ads](#) – To increase the viral distribution of your Facebook Page, you might also consider purchasing Facebook Ads. Facebook Ads allows your business to become part of people’s daily conversations. Ads can be displayed in the right hand Ad Space, which is visible to users as they browse Facebook to connect with their friends, as well as in the context of News Feed, attached to relevant social stories. The social stories, such as a friend becoming a fan of your Facebook Page, make your ad more interesting and more relevant. Facebook Ads are placed in highly visible parts of the site without interrupting the user experience on Facebook.

Creating a Facebook Ad is quick and easy, and you don’t need an advertising or media agency to do it. Using the [Facebook Ad tool](#), simply write a creative message, choose your target audience and set your daily budget. You can buy ads by number of clicks (CPC) or by number of impressions (CPM). While your ad is running, you will receive performance metrics from [Facebook Insights](#), including demographic data of the people engaging with your ad and feedback on the best way to optimize its performance. For more information on purchasing Facebook Ads, visit the [Help Center](#).

- [Facebook Insights](#) – With Facebook Insights, you have access to valuable metrics on activity, fan demographics, ad performance and trends. This allows you to improve your custom content on Facebook and adjust your ad targeting. Facebook Insights is a free service for all Facebook Pages and Facebook Ads.
- [Facebook Polls](#) – Facebook Polls offer a fast and easy way to get answers to your important business questions. Because tens of millions of people express themselves authentically on Facebook, you can accurately target your polls by gender, age, location, interests and other demographic data. Using the Facebook Poll interface, you can write and deploy a single-question poll within minutes, see real-time streaming results and get responses from hundreds of people in as little as 30 minutes.

For more information, visit the [Facebook Ads Page](#) on Facebook, which was created to encourage conversations and share resources with business users.

BEST PRACTICES

Based on our experience at Dell and conversations with small- and medium-size business owners, we’ve identified several best practices for using Facebook, such as:

- Assign an employee to create and manage your company’s Facebook Page. It’s important to post new information, photos and videos regularly to keep it fresh.
- Respond to messages and questions left on your Page’s discussion board and “Wall” within 24 hours.
- Build a creative application using Facebook Platform to drive traffic to your Page.
- Don’t fall victim to the mentality: “If I build it, they will come.” It’s important to develop a strategy to attract fans, which may involve both paid and unpaid approaches.

BEST PRACTICES (continued)

- Promote your Facebook Page outside of Facebook to attract more fans. This can be as simple as adding a line to your current marketing or PR materials, such as “Find us on Facebook to learn more.” Be sure to review Facebook’s [guidelines](#) for external promotion. Facebook also offers a “Share” [button](#) that you can add to your Web site to make it easier for your content to be shared on Facebook.
- Don’t think of Facebook as a marketing channel to push company messages. Think of it as a community where you can participate and add genuine value.

CASE

[Povo](#) is an ever-expanding wiki of knowledge on Boston where locals can share and gather information about everything that makes the city unique. Povo needed a geo-targeted and cost-effective way to support the initial launch in the Boston area. The start-up created a series of Facebook Ads that included messaging related to brand, as well as specific events and promotions. Using Facebook Insights, the company was able to adjust the ads on a daily basis to optimize CPC, resulting in a significant amount of quality traffic. Povo drove thousands of new visitors to the site and exposed a large local audience to the company’s messaging. Perhaps most importantly, they did it in a highly measurable and cost-effective way.

ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Visit www.facebook.com/dellsocialmedia to read all eight guides written by Dell’s Small Business and Communities & Conversations teams:

- Part 1: Learn to Listen
- Part 2: Join the Conversation
- Part 3: Start a Blog
- Part 4: Tap into Twitter
- Part 5: Crowdfund Your Next Big Idea
- Part 6: Harness the Power of Facebook
- Part 7: Share Photos and Videos Online
- Part 8: Measure Your Success Online

We hope you will join this Facebook community, share your own ideas, and continue the conversation with Dell and small businesses around the world.