

Marketing tips (on Facebook page)

In this lesson we are going to give you a few tips. Recent studies have found that some small business owners mistakenly think they don't have enough time, money or other resources to invest in Facebook promotions. It doesn't require a full-time social media coordinator nor much of a budget, if any.

The adage "keep it simple" goes a long way here, and with that in mind, here are some ways for small businesses to maximize their presence on Facebook with minimum resources.

Manage expectations: Set realistic goals for your approach to social media and you won't be disappointed. Don't expect to get thousands of fans within your first month, but think more along the lines of a two or three digit number. Then if you hit something larger than you originally anticipated, you'll be pleasantly surprised and that will give you momentum.

Make time: Unless you can find an intern willing to plan your media campaigns for free, cultivating a Facebook presence doesn't have to be a full-time job nor something that eats up all your free time. Try to set aside an hour a day to work on your business's page, post updates and communicate directly with customers and fans.

Learn as much as you can: Take notes based on your experiences with Facebook's pages and other business services - at the very least, write down questions about things you don't understand so you can make a note to look them up later. You'll find just about anything you're curious to know within the site's official help center. Make a habit of reading as much as you can on this part of the site, without overdoing it.

Start with a small budget: It's possible to promote your business on Facebook without spending anything. At some point you might get the itch to buy advertising, which certainly helps but also presents the temptation to overspend. You're better off starting out doing small test ads to see what kind of performance you get for your money, and then ramp up when you figure out which demographics and key words you want to target.

Create a page, not a profile: Don't open a second account on the social network to make a profile for your business. Not only does that go against Facebook's rules but it also moves you one degree of separation away from the people who are already on your friend list. These folks are the first people you want to invite to become fans of your business's page.

Post cool status updates: Make your profile work for your page by posting witty status updates that encourage your friends to engage with your business page. Apply that same sense of wit to the goal of one post per day to your page's wall. If you can phrase it as a question, so much the better, because that will inspire responses from your community.

Have one-on-one conversations: Send a thank-you message right after someone clicks "like" on your page, and make a point of responding to messages and wall posts within 24 hours. Pay careful attention to whatever fans tell you on your page, and try to respond to their needs.

Don't spam: People have gotten pretty tired of mass messaging and excessive numbers of posts filling up news feeds - don't contribute to this noise and fans will appreciate it. When you have something to say to your followers, put it on your wall, not in their inboxes.

Create coupons and promotions: Discounts for first-time customers really work toward generating repeat business. But don't limit the promotions to the first time someone engages

with your company, lest they lose interest. Periodically put things on sale if you can, in order to keep people coming back.

Encourage check-ins: Wherever your business operates, that counts as a place on Facebook. Make a point of checking in to your place of work every day you are there, even if you're operating out of a home office. This will put your company's name into people's news feeds every time you punch in.

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