Chapter 8

Hosting Facebook Events

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In This Chapter

▶ Exploring Facebook Events

▶ Finding events, and adding them to your Events list

▶ Creating and customizing your own event

▶ Inviting people to and promoting that event

▶ Managing and editing your event

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*F*acebook Events are a great way of getting people together virtually or in person to support your business, brand, or product. They are also an economical way of getting the word out beyond your normal in-house marketing list by inviting the fans of your Facebook Page (see Chapter 4) or the members of your Facebook Group (see Chapter 7). Fans can also help you promote your Facebook Event by sharing the event with a group of their friends when it seems of value.

You may want to RSVP to and attend an event to see how the process works. This should give you a feeling for how Facebook Events are done and what you may need for throwing your own event.

In this chapter, we cover how to find relevant events that you may want to attend and how to add events to your Page or group's Events list. We also discuss creating your event and promoting it to your fans, listing your event, and best practices for managing your event and following up afterward.

Getting Started with Facebook Events

If you have been a member of Facebook for a while, no doubt you have been invited to a Facebook event by now. They typically appear in your e-mail as an invite and a reminder on your Home page when you first log in to Facebook.

If you have never received an invite, don't despair. You can always find plenty of events to attend by choosing Applications⇨Events on the bottom navigation bar. (See Figure 8-1.)

TIP

After you have created an Event, you can also gain quick access to Events with the icon displayed in the lower navigation bar. Hover your mouse on the icon and click Events for easy access to the Events page. Remember that not all applications display an icon. Facebook displays six icons at a time.

After you select Events, Facebook displays the Events page, which tracks all present and future events. If you are new to Facebook, this area will be empty. (See Figure 8-2.)

Exploring the Events page

If you find a Facebook Event that you might want to attend, or share with your friends or on your Page, you can check it out first in the Event's preview page (see Figure 8-3). The Events page shows you the who, what, where, when, and why of several events without having to click through to the event's full page.

To view more details about an event, you can click the name of the event link or click the photo or title to open the Event page. (See Figure 8-4.) You may also want to view the guest list by clicking the View Guestlist link to see how popular the event is with your friends (who is presented first in the list) and non-friends (who is presented after).

Events →

Figure 8-1:
The Events option as listed in the Applications menu.
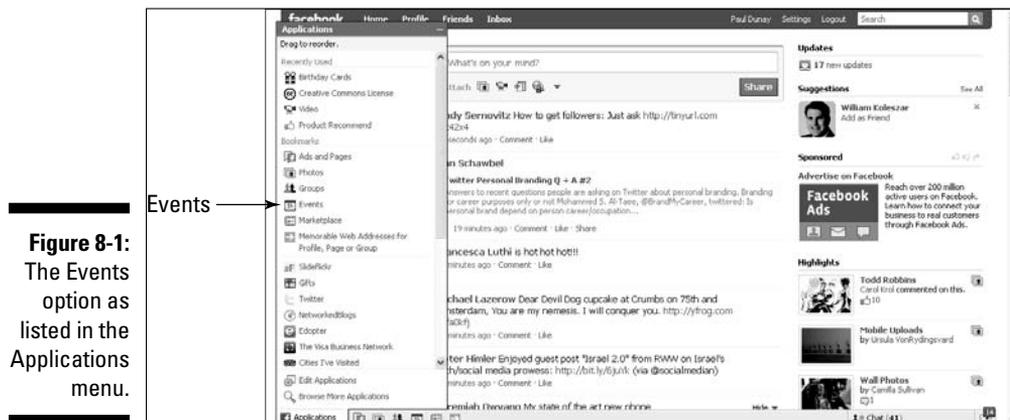
**Figure 8-2:** Facebook Events manager screen.
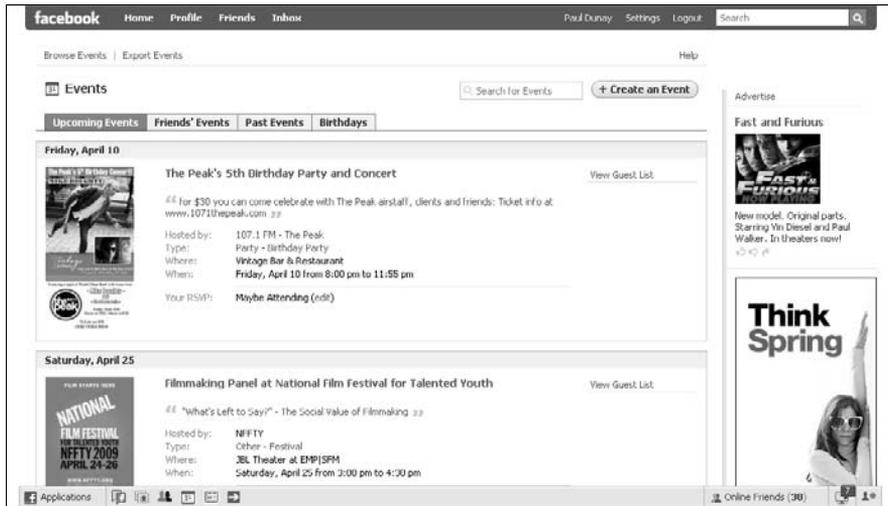
Figure 8-3: The Events preview screen.
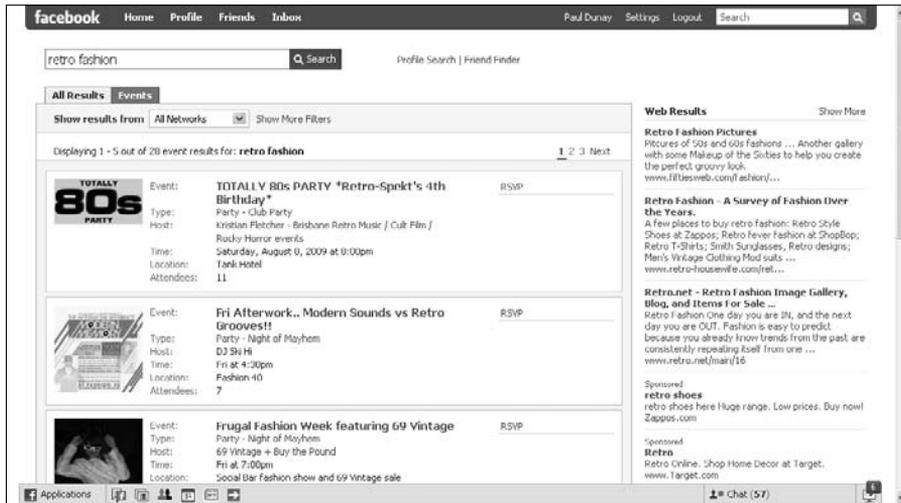
Each Event page has the following elements on the left column:

- ✔ **Name:** The name of the event.
- ✔ **Host:** The name of the host or organizing firm.
- ✔ **Type:** Facebook's pre-defined categories, such as Party, Causes, Education, Meetings, Music/Arts, Sports, Trips, Other, and so on. And Facebook's pre-defined subcategories, such as Business Meeting, Club/Group Meeting, Convention, Dorm/House Meeting, Informational Meeting, and so on.
- ✔ **Date:** The time the event starts.
- ✔ **Time:** The time the event ends.
- ✔ **Location:** Where the event will be held.
- ✔ **Street Address:** The event street address.
- ✔ **City/Town:** The event city or town.
- ✔ **Description:** Text used to describe the event.
- ✔ **Photos:** Photos uploaded about or after the event.
- ✔ **Videos:** Videos uploaded about or after the event.
- ✔ **The Wall:** Comments and Conversations about the event.

Figure 8-4:
View the
detailed
Event
screen.

Each Event page has the following elements on the right column:

- ✔ **Photo:** A photo about the event.
- ✔ **Share:** Where you can post to your profile or send a message about the event to your friends.
- ✔ **Export:** The feature that allows you to export a calendar invite.
- ✔ **Your RSVP:** Where to change your status from Attending to Maybe Attending to Not Attending.
- ✔ **Other Information:** Information could include whether you can bring a guest with you.
- ✔ **Other Invitees:** The names and photos of those that are yet to be confirmed guests.
- ✔ **Event Type:** The information on whether the event is open, closed, or secret.
- ✔ **Admins:** The name(s) of the administrators of the event.

Every Facebook Event has its own page and URL, which makes it easy for you to invite nonmembers to your Event. Many of the details from the preview are carried over to the Event page, but you also see two of the most important Event features: the Wall for this Event and who's invited to this Event. (See Figure 8-5.)
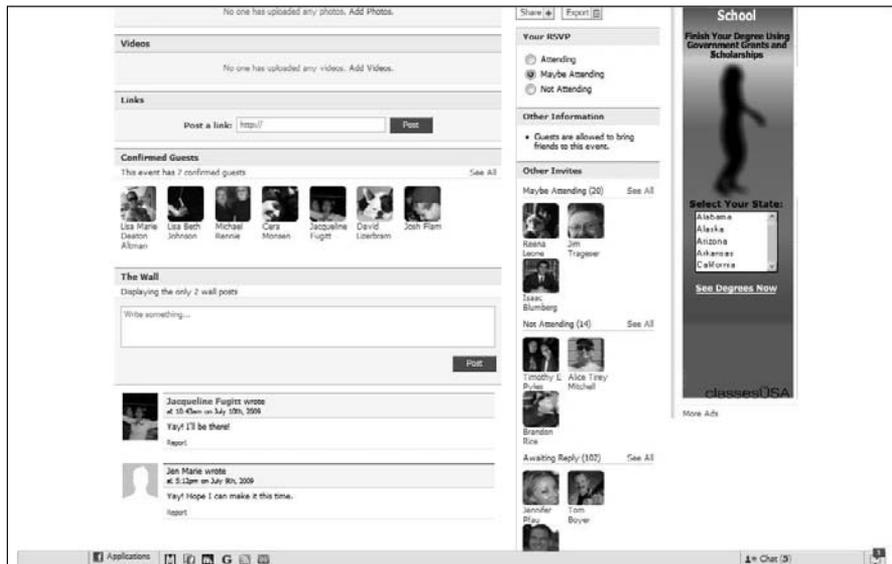
Figure 8-5: Checking out who's coming to this event and any comments on the Wall.

TIP

Confirmed Guest lists are a good place to find new friends for your personal Facebook network.

In addition to the more complete description of the event, the Wall gives you an indication of the tenor of the conversation you can expect at the event. Also, looking at the Confirmed Guests section, as well as the RSVPs in the Other Invites section, gives you a better idea of who is coming and who you might be able to network with.

Finding an event

On Facebook there are plenty of Events happening everyday! And finding an Event that interests you is actually quite easy. You can find relevant events two ways: search for events using the Search box in the upper right of any Events page or look at your friend's events on the Friends' Events tab. We cover each using our Pop Tot Tees example.

Using the Events Search box

The Search box on the Events page is located next to the Create an Event button near the top right of your screen. You just need to plug in relevant keywords to get a result.

TIP

Don't expect the search to be as good as Google. It won't correct your spelling or suggest other events based on relevant keywords. If you don't find what you're looking for with your first search, search with alternative keywords.

Searching with the keyword *Retro Fashion,* we found the Oh So Retro event, which might be of interest to Pop Tot Tees fans or Retro Tee Revolution group members. Therefore, we might want to RSVP for this event in order to promote the event to our Page fans or Group members. (See Figure 8-6.)

Browsing the Friends' Events tab

If searching for an event doesn't turn up anything interesting, then looking at what events your Facebook friends are looking at is another option. As you know by now, Facebook is built to be social — so it's perfectly okay to look at what your friends may be doing. This is why we recommend building a strong social network to help you leverage its power when you need it.

REMEMBER

Build your Facebook friends network before you need it — it comes in handy when looking for events or other more viral aspects of Facebook.

To locate events that your friends may be attending — select the Friends' Events tab on the Events page, which shows you any events your friends have added to their Events list. (See Figure 8-7.)

Figure 8-6:
Search
results
for the
keyword
*Retro
Fashion*.
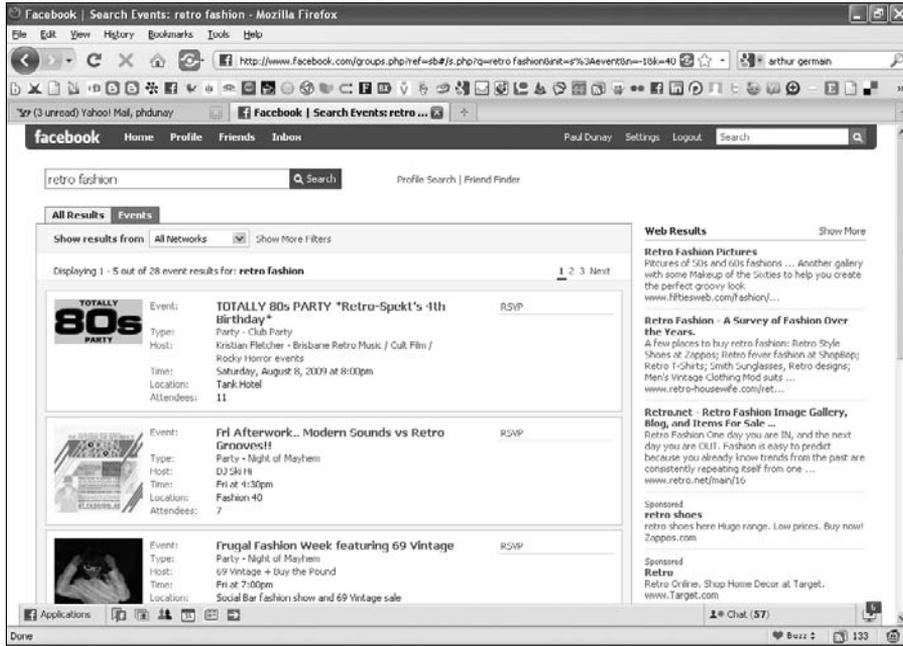
Figure 8-7:
Browsing
your
Friends'
Events list.
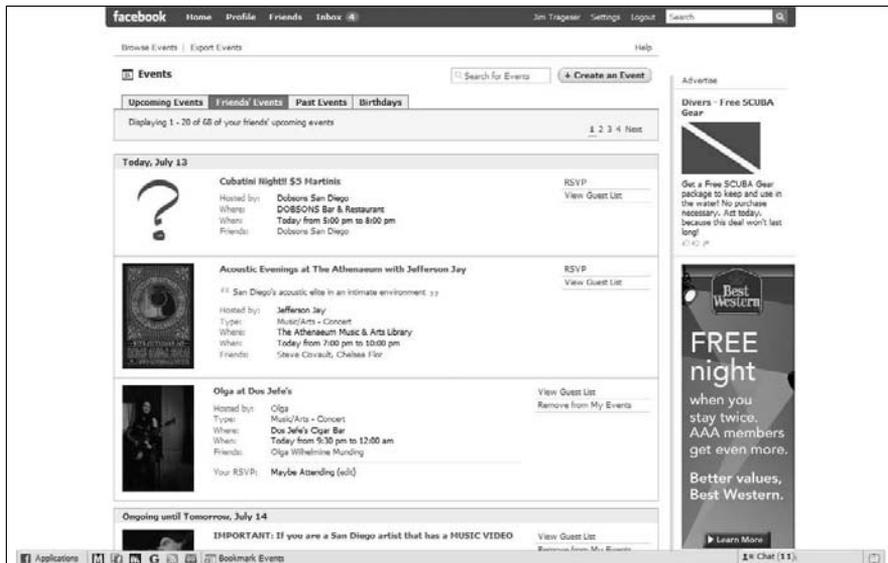
Adding an event to your Events list

Assuming you take the plunge and decide to attend an event, click the RSVP link next to the Event name. The event appears on your Wall and in your Events tab (see Chapter 4 to learn about the + tab) for everyone in your personal network to see. (See Figure 8-8.)

After you add an event, you see two new links on the Event page: Invite People to Come and + Share. What's great about Facebook is there's no shortage of ways for you to get the word out about an event you're attending to your network.

Using Invite People to Come

Selecting the Invite People to Come link takes you to the Invite Friends page. Here you can invite friends who are in your friend List. (See Figure 8-9.)

If you wish to share this event more directly with your friends or fans, then you can always click the + Share button located above the RSVP section on the Event details page.

You can also invite people who are not part of Facebook to this event by typing their e-mail addresses into the Invite Friends by E-mail box; separate the addresses by commas.

WARNING!

Inviting non-Facebook members to an event means they need to register with Facebook before responding to your request — so be judicious about the use of this option.

Figure 8-8: Events that you are attending show in your News Feed.

After you load the names of the people you wish to invite, all you need to do is add a personal message, and then click Send Invites.

Using the Share feature

Alternatively, you can use the + Share link to inform friends about an event. The Share feature is similar to an e-mail. You can invite individual friends by typing their names or invite entire Friend Lists up to 20 people at a time. (See Figure 8-10.) For more information on using the Share feature, see Chapter 6.

Figure 8-9: Inviting people to an event.
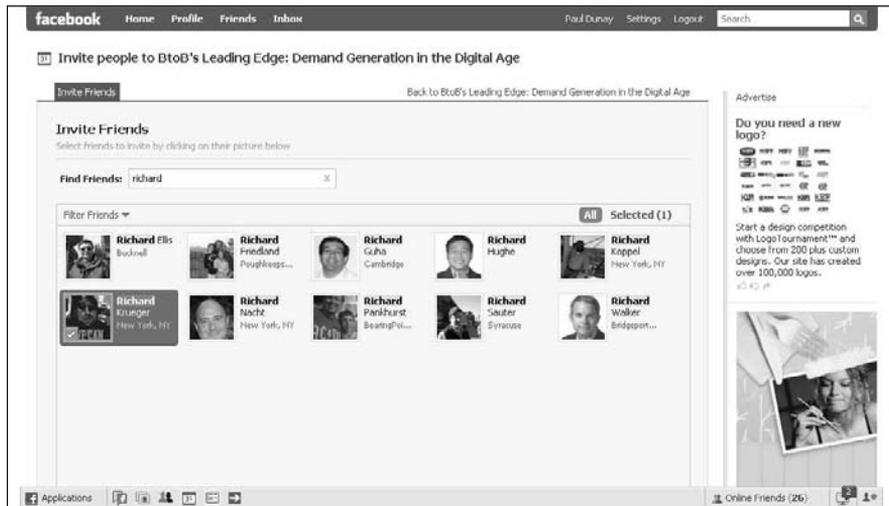
Figure 8-10: Sharing events with a list of friends.
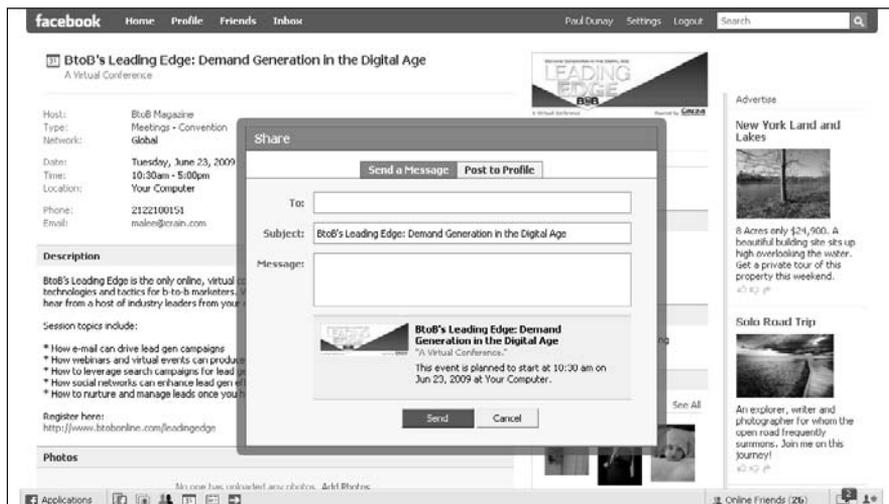
Synchronizing Events with your Calendar

Every Event page has an Export link on it. With this link, you can quickly add the Facebook Event to your favorite scheduling program, such as Microsoft Outlook, Google Calendar, and Apple iCalendar.

Simply click the Export button located above the RSVP section on the right side of the Events page. Facebook offers you an iCalendar format which you can change and save as a different format if you need to.

Creating an Event

Facebook Events helps you with the fine points of creating and throwing your own event. Generally, we think Pages should list any event you would normally post to your business Web site. If it's good enough for your corporate Web site, post it to Facebook — but you need to know how to create an event.

After you've been through the process a time or two, you should be able to create a Facebook Event quickly and easily. If you want to throw an event for your Page, go to your Page to create the event.

To go to your Page:

1. **Choose Applications⇨Ads and Pages at the bottom-left corner of the navigation bar.**

2. **Click the Pages link at the top of your screen.**

3. **To go to your Page, either click the Photo or the Edit page link.**

Entering event info

Start by choosing Applications⇨Events from the lower navigation bar to go to the Events page. Click the Create an Event button in the upper-right corner to display the Event Info tab. (See Figure 8-11.)

You can add Events to your applications' bookmarks and drag them to reorder them. Facebook allows up to six applications in your applications toolbar.

To fill out the event's information, you need the following:

- ✔ **Event Name:** The name of the event.
- ✔ **Tagline:** The purpose or reason for the event.

- ✔ **Host:** The name of the host or organizing firm.

- ✔ **Type:** Facebook's pre-defined categories, such as Party, Causes, Education, Meetings, Music/Arts, Sports, Trips, Other, and so on.

- ✔ **Subcategory:** Facebook's pre-defined subcategories, such as Business Meeting, Club/Group Meeting, Convention, Dorm/House Meeting, Informational Meeting, and so on.

- ✔ **Description:** A paragraph of text you can provide to describe the event.

- ✔ **Start Time:** The time the event will start.

- ✔ **End Time:** The time the event will end.

- ✔ **Location:** Where the event will be held.

- ✔ **Street:** The event street address.

- ✔ **City/Town:** The event city or town.

- ✔ **Phone:** The phone number of the event organizer.

- ✔ **E-mail:** The e-mail of the event organizer.

TIP

Neither the phone nor the e-mail are required fields in case you feel uneasy about sharing this information online.

Figure 8-11: Entering the details about our event.

After you enter this information, click the Create Event button. The Customize tab appears.

Customizing event settings

Now is your chance to liven up your event's page with an image that can get some attention. If no image is chosen, a question mark displays.

With all images on Facebook, be sure you have the right to distribute the image because you'll be asked to certify this.

The Internet offers plenty of sources for royalty free images, such as iStock-Photo, so be sure to use one if you don't have a proprietary image from your business.

Photos come in many standard formats. However, you can only upload photos to Facebook in JPG, GIF, or PNG formats. Pictures can be 396 pixels wide with a height up to 3x the width. Maximum file size is 4MB.

1. **Click the Browse button to search your computer for a graphic file.**

2. **Select the picture that you want to use.**

3. **Select the box to certify that you have the right to distribute the picture and that it doesn't violate the Facebook Terms of Use.**

4. **Click the Upload Picture button.**

Assuming you like how the image looks, you can move on to the Event Options settings. (See Figure 8-12.)
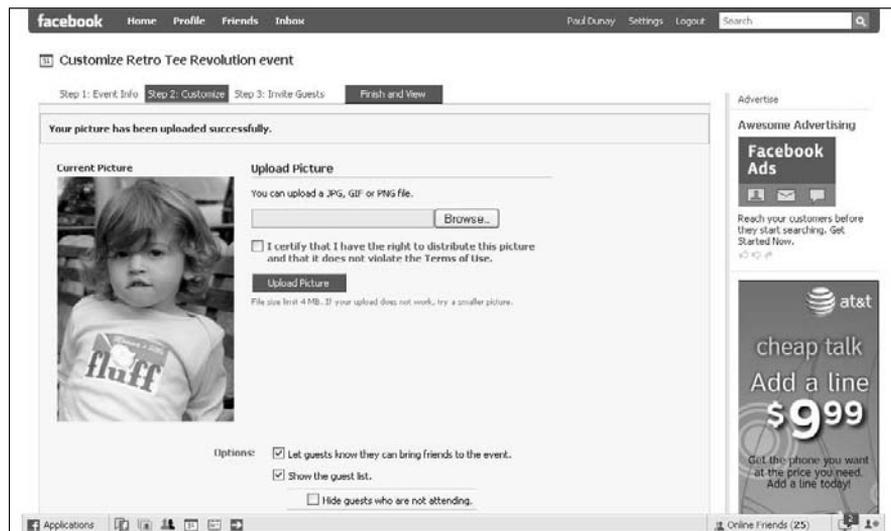
Figure 8-12: Uploading a picture for your event.

Setting up your event

You can specify Facebook Event options, access, and publicity. You use these selections to customize your event quickly and easily. (See Figure 8-13.)

The event's Options section lets you select the following:

- ✔ **Let Guests Know They Can Bring Friends to the Event:** Enables the Invite Friends to Come feature, which we discuss in the earlier "Adding an event to your Events list" section.

- ✔ **Show the Guest List:** Allows the guest list to be seen.

- ✔ **Enable the Wall:** Allows guests to post comments about the event and interact with other guests.

  A good use of the Wall for a Facebook Event is to collect questions for the event's speaker if one will be present.

- ✔ **Enable Photos:** Select this option if you want to collect photos of the event. Two additional options allow you to control who can upload photos:

  • Allow all members to upload photos.

  • Only allow admins to upload photos.

- ✔ **Enable Video:** Select this option if you want to collect videos of the event. Two additional options allow you to control who can upload videos:

  • Allow all members to upload videos.

  • Only allow admins to upload videos.

- ✔ **Enable Links:** Select this option if you want to collect links related to the event. Two additional options allow you to control who can upload text:

  • Allow all members to post items.

  • Only allow admins to post items.

Facebook allows you to restrict access to your Event depending on what your business goals might be. The Access section offers the following settings:

- ✔ **This Event Is Open:** Anyone can join the event and see the Wall, discussion board, videos, and photos on the event's page.

- ✔ **This Event Is Closed:** Anyone can view the basic event information and then request an invitation for themselves, but only invitees on the guest list can see the Wall, discussion board, videos, and photos on the event's page.

✔ **This Event Is Secret:** By definition, these events cannot be found by using Search or by browsing the profiles of the friends; the events truly are secret. These are invitation-only events; therefore, only the invitees can see the Wall, discussion board, videos, and photos on the event's page.
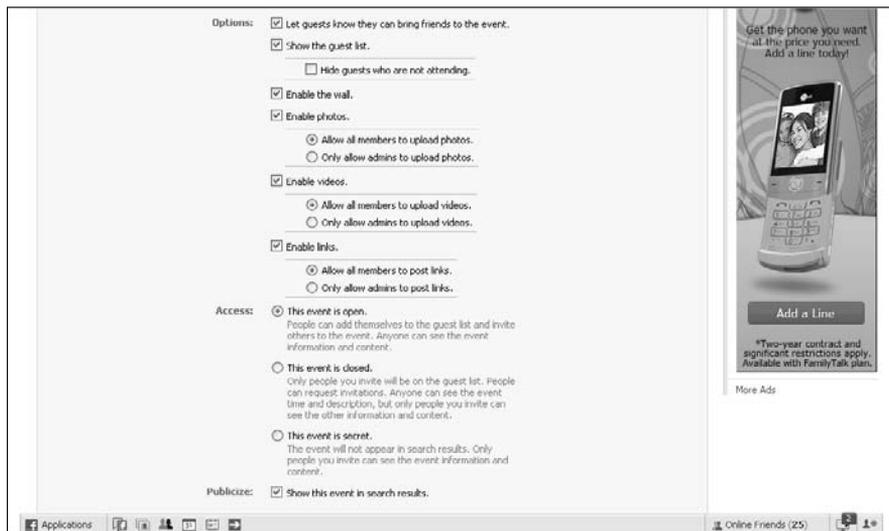
Finally, be sure to select the Publicize check box if you want your event to show up in Search results for the name and description of your Event.

When you complete this section, be sure to click Save. You can always skip Step 2 for now, but be advised you won't be able to go live until you finish this section. After your event settings have been customized, the fun now is to invite your friends to join this event!

Inviting Guests to your event

After you complete the Event Info and Customize tabs, you're almost ready to publish your event! Inviting friends or fans to the event isn't mandatory; you can simply publish your event and hope for the best. But Facebook makes inviting friends to your event so easy, it's hard not to.

After you click Save on the Customize tab, the Guest List tab appears. You can invite friends by selecting them directly from a list or by searching for friends with the Search box on top of the list. You can also invite an entire friend List you might have created (see Chapter 2 for a full discussion of creating a friend List). Best of all, you can even invite non-Facebook members to the event by

typing their e-mail addresses (separated by commas) into the Invite box, or by importing their e-mail addresses from popular Web-based e-mail accounts, such as Hotmail, Yahoo!, and Gmail.

After you publish your event, it appears on both the Wall and the Events tab of your Page. You can also invite all of your fans by clicking the Update Fans of (your page name). They are sent an e-mail once you target the audience, and add a subject line and message.

WARNING!

Inviting non-Facebook members to an event means they need to register with Facebook before responding to your request — so be judicious about the use of this option.

After you fill in your list of invitees, you need to add a quick message to the invite. Provide something compelling for the reader, and make sure the value invitees can derive by coming to your event is front and center in your message. You can invite your first 100 people with this invite method. (See Figure 8-14.)

TIP

Facebook allows you to invite an unlimited number of attendees to an event in increments of 100, with no more than 300 outstanding invitations at a time.
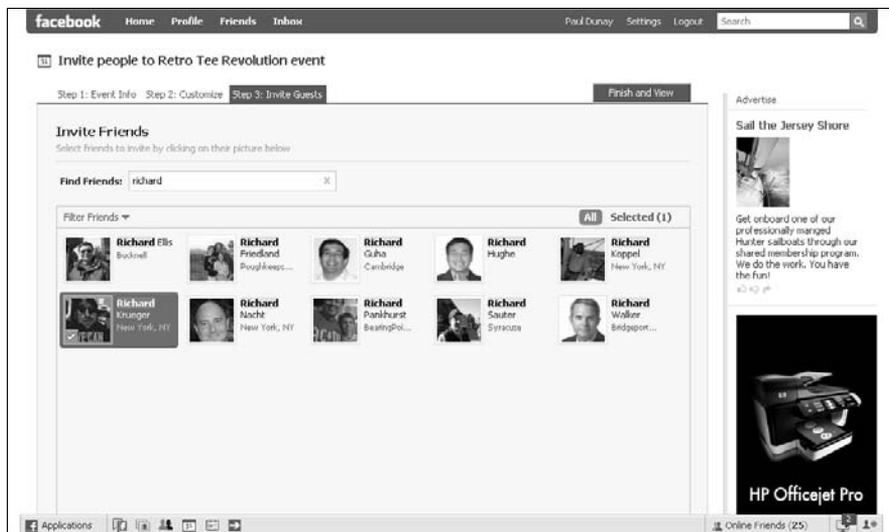
Figure 8-14: Sending out our first batch of invites.

Managing Your Event

After you set up a Facebook Event and send your invitations, you need to consider how to manage the event. Anything can happen at a live event, that is: Weather conditions can affect attendance, last minute speaker changes can alter the schedule, or an outright cancellation of the event can occur. These possibilities require you to develop a communication strategy regarding your invitees.

As you get closer to the event date, it is critical that you keep your event in the minds of your invitees. You might want to plan when you're going to reach out to them with a reminder. At a minimum, a good reminder protocol is to reach out the week before the event, the day before the event, and the day of the event.

Printing the Guest list for your event

Facebook makes it very easy to generate a printer friendly guest list for your event. You simply select Print Guest List, which is found above your RSVP section.

You can select which guest to print based on their RSVP, from those attending, maybe attending, no replies, and all attendees. It displays the names in alphabetical order and you can choose to add the person's profile picture to the print out by choosing the Show Profile Picture check box at the top. This can be enormously helpful in managing large events, where you don't personally know many of the attendees, or where event security is an issue.

Editing your event

Making changes to your event's page is easy. You simply click the Edit Event link found under the event's photo. You will be able to edit the Event Info and Customize tab you encountered when setting up the event.

Nearly everything can be changed about the event including the location. You can also notify everyone of any changes by posting a message on your Wall.

You can not change the name of the event once you have confirmed guests.

Following up after an event

Rarely do we see much follow-up after a Facebook Event, but we feel doing so is just good protocol. For traditional events, follow-up can be an e-mail, a phone call, or a written note, and we feel some of those techniques can apply here.

If you had a very healthy debate with lots of questions, you could post a transcript for attendees or even non-attendees. If some questions weren't answered because of time constraints, you could write the answers and send them to the attendees, too.

At the very least, a short thank you note to those that attended is just good form. As well, sending a 'Sorry you couldn't make it' note to those that didn't attend, perhaps with a recap, is also good form. Taking several photos of the event and posting them is the single best way to reach out. By aggressively taking photos, tagging them with the attendee's name(s), and posting them, you can leverage the power of the Facebook platform.