

Chapter 5

Developing a Facebook Marketing Plan

In This Chapter

- ▶ Targeting your audience
 - ▶ Identifying your marketing goals
 - ▶ Crafting your message
 - ▶ Applying some Facebook marketing tactics
 - ▶ Assessing your marketing resources
-

One of the great things about Facebook is that it provides you access to a very large and growing audience at relatively low or even no cost. All you need is just a little sweat equity on your part. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't have a strategy for what you are trying to achieve for your business.

Whether you're a small business, an artist or celebrity, or sell a well known (or soon to be well known) product or service, you need to think about your audience, who they are, how they want to be spoken to, what they want, as well as what message you want them to receive and the Facebook tactics that get them to interact with that message.



Traditional marketing — advertising or “shouting at” your customers to get them to buy something — does not work in a social network such as Facebook. It might even work against you. Social networks represent a shift in the way that you use the Internet. Rather than just searching for information, you can search for and interact with like-minded people who have similar interests.

So, approaching your social network marketing with a word of mouth or viral marketing mentality is important. Viral marketing is a way of using customers to promote awareness of your business. One way to think about Facebook for the marketer is that it makes viral marketing simpler. From becoming a fan

of a company's Page (see Chapter 4), to confirming attendance at a Facebook Event (see Chapter 8), to installing an application (app) on your Page (see Chapter 12), these social actions are automatically turned into stories that appear on a member's Wall. This exposure to other Facebook members expands word-of-mouth awareness of your business. For more information about viral marketing and your business Page (see Chapter 6).



You are entering into a conversation between you and your customer, so always think in terms of what they want and how they want to be treated. As long as you keep these two things in mind, you'll be successful.

By the end of this chapter, you'll be able to meet these challenges and begin to put your marketing strategy in place. So, let's start with defining your audience.

Defining Your Audience

Whatever your business goals, always assemble the best information that you can about your audience. The better you understand the culture and viewpoint of your audience, the more effectively you can capture their attention and deliver your message.

Unlike Google, which only uses keywords search terms, Facebook can use all of the profile information that member has entered at its disposal. For example, if you are looking to reach men ages 35 - 45 who live in the Northeast and like Scuba Diving, you can do that. With Facebook advertising options (see Chapter 9), you see how to target your message by location, age, relationship status, and interests. You can even specify a language, as Facebook is available in more than 640 languages with many more in development. So, no matter whom you are targeting, Facebook has you covered.

Targeting your demographic

Identifying and then reaching a specific audience has never been this exact and cost-effective until now. The Facebook Insight tool helps you find out more about who is visiting your Facebook Page (see Chapter 10), including an age and sex breakdown of your fans. And the Facebook ad targeting capabilities (see Chapter 9) makes it relatively easy to get your message to the right demographic within Facebook.

The face of the average Facebook user has actually shifted over the past few years. While the Facebook population continues to grow, its total users have started to represent the world's population more closely. But right now, Facebook is in the middle of a shift from a college crowd demographic to a more eclectic one.

The fastest growing demographic is the 35–54 year olds, which have a growth rate of 276 percent. The next fastest growing demographic is the over 55 crowd, which has a growth rate of 194 percent. The core of the Facebook audience, the 25–34 year old group, is still doubling every six months. Moreover, the largest demographic concentration, the college crowd of 18–24 year olds, is down from 54 percent six months ago to 41 percent. And somewhat surprising, more females (58 percent) than males (42 percent) are on Facebook.

Targeting your psychographic (Eek!)

Before you go running for the hills, that's *psychographic*, not psychopathic. Psychographic variables are any qualities relating to a user's personality, values, attitudes, interests, or lifestyles (such as music you love, politicians you endorse, or causes you support). These variables are in contrast with *demographic* variables (such as age and gender) and *behavioral* variables (such as usage rate or loyalty) and can help you target potential customers.

Psychographics is exceptionally relevant in any discussion of social networks because your target audience is more likely to interact with you along the lines of their interests, their values, and the substance of their lifestyle.

Examples of this can be seen in Facebook apps similar to iLike, which integrates your favorite music and makes recommendations on your profile. President Barack Obama's Facebook group was very popular because he tapped into the values of many Americans. Thus, his group grew virally.

Understanding the lives of your customers and prospects is key when communicating your business or product to them. So, let's define a few objectives of your marketing strategy.

Defining Your Marketing Goals

Now that you have a better understanding of the makeup of the Facebook audience and some knowledge of demographics and psychographics of the Facebook audience, you can define a few goals for your Facebook marketing strategy.

Your Facebook approach should at least include these four objectives:

- ✓ Building your brand's awareness
- ✓ Driving your sales
- ✓ Forming a community of people who share your values
- ✓ Listening to feedback about your brand

We discuss each objective in more depth. But keep in mind that they aren't mutually exclusive but rather a combination. You can start with one method and advance your strategy in other areas while you go along.

Building the ultimate brand

The concept of branding can be traced back in history to the early Romans. But the story that always stuck with me was the concept of farmers branding their cattle with branding irons so they could be recognized by the farmer. It was a way of distinguishing their product from other products that looked very similar.

These days things are very similar. A brand is how you define your business in a way that differentiates you from your competition. It is a key element in defining your marketing goals. With a Facebook Page, for example (see Chapter 4), you can build awareness of your brand with all your current and future potential customers.

Pages are probably the best place for an organization to start on Facebook. They serve as a home for business entities on Facebook — a place to notify people of an upcoming event, provide hours of operation and contact information, show recent news, and even display photos, videos, text, and other types of content.

They also allow for two-way conversations between a business and its customers. In this way, Facebook provides a great feedback loop to learn about your customers' needs. A business Page is similar to a personal profile as joining them as a fan is similar to that of becoming a friend of another member.

Start by letting people know you are on Facebook. You can use your new Facebook Page as a reason to reach out to existing customers, friends, and contacts outside of Facebook through your normal marketing channels. For example, you can send them an e-mail blast or include the Page address in a printed newsletter or flyer. Something as simple as "Join us on Facebook!" does the trick.

Within Facebook, you can also send an e-mail to your existing fans or friends with the name of your Page. (Please be aware of the Facebook policy on sending spam.) Plus, Facebook offers a great utility for sharing your new Page — the Share button. (See Chapter 6.)

The Share button, found at the lower left column of any Page, allows you to invite Facebook friends, or a list of Facebook friends, to check out your Page. Plus, you can input an e-mail address of someone who may not be on Facebook so that they can view your Page.

Driving sales

Whether you're a local, national, or international business, Facebook can help you to drive the sales of your products and services. As another potential sales channel, you can leverage the social network in a number of ways to achieve your sales objectives.

Facebook Pages are an ideal way to communicate special offerings and discounts and can provide an easy path to purchase with a simple link back to your company Web site. Some larger retailers are bringing the entire shopping cart experience to Facebook. For example, 1-800-Flowers recently launched a flower store within their Facebook Page. It's easily accessible from a tab (see Chapter 6) labeled Store and provides a secure transaction environment for Facebook members to make a credit card purchase and send a dozen roses to a friend in the real world.

Many marketers are also discovering the potential in Facebook as a cost-effective advertising medium. They're testing and launching targeted ad campaigns that employ traditional direct marketing techniques. The most successful offer is an incentive that appeals to your respective audience. Some brave new marketers are even experimenting with the new video engagement ads to provide a multimedia sizzle to their sales pitch.

The Facebook Marketplace is also a good outpost if you have a business that deals in books, furniture, electronics, cars, tickets, or other tangible items. See Chapter 11 for a discussion of the Facebook Marketplace.

Facebook Events are another avenue from which to drive your sales. For example, you can hold a new product launch party or a wine tasting for potential new customers. And you can throw a Facebook-only Event for fans and allow them to network as well. See Chapter 8 for a discussion of Facebook Events.

Forming a community

One of the best uses of a social network is to build community. No matter what your marketing goals, forming a community can be tricky. We tend to think it arrogant for marketers to feel they can build a community that people will flock to — the proverbial “build it and they will come” model.

It is possible, however, with both Facebook Groups (see Chapter 7) and Facebook Pages for your business (see Chapter 4). You can create a new community focused on an existing cause that matches with your business goals, and gives your group members the tools to communicate with each other in Facebook. (For a comparison of Facebook Groups and Facebook Pages, see Chapter 7).

For example, build a Facebook Group around a cause related to your brand. Lee Jeans’ National Denim Day supports breast cancer awareness and the search for a cure — a good cause, and who doesn’t like to wear denim! The Lee Jeans’ National Denim Day cause informs the Facebook community about wearing jeans to support breast cancer awareness, as shown in Figure 5-1.



Spirited discussions are prominent in Facebook Groups so plan for someone in your company — a product expert or someone on the communications team — to lead regular discussion threads. This could be weekly, bi-monthly, or even monthly. You probably want people coming back to the group more often than monthly but less often than weekly. For example, weekly updates from your Group might be too much for your fans to handle, but because of the nature of the Web, you’ll want to remind them to come back to your site more often than monthly just to keep your group fresh in their minds.

Listening to feedback

Facebook Groups gives you the opportunity to create community and have discussions with the members of your Group. But another noteworthy byproduct of forming a Facebook Group is the ability to get feedback from the members.

Next time you think of launching a new product or service, consider having the members of your Group weigh in on it long before it goes to market. And don’t worry about a delay getting the product to market; it only takes a

few days to get feedback from your member, but you have to build up your member base before you can tap into it. See Chapter 7 for more information about building a Group for your business.

Suppose you are looking for discussions about your brand. Facebook is fertile ground for open, honest peer-to-peer discussions about your business. Just plug any search terms into the Facebook Search box and see what comes up. You might be surprised to find other fan Pages devoted to your brand started by fanatics of your brand.



Facebook does not publish Group discussions to Internet search engines. Therefore, they are not indexed, which is how a search engine finds its information. This may change, but currently there is no way to monitor Facebook Groups via the Internet because they exist behind a password-protected community. So be sure you manually search for your business on Facebook to ensure you see any conversations and feedback.



Facebook Pages are publicly available to everyone regardless of whether the reader is a Facebook member. This last point is important, as public availability of Facebook Pages means that search engines, such as Google, can find and index these pages, often improving a company's search results positioning.

Figure 5-1:
Lee Jeans' National Denim Day to support breast cancer awareness.

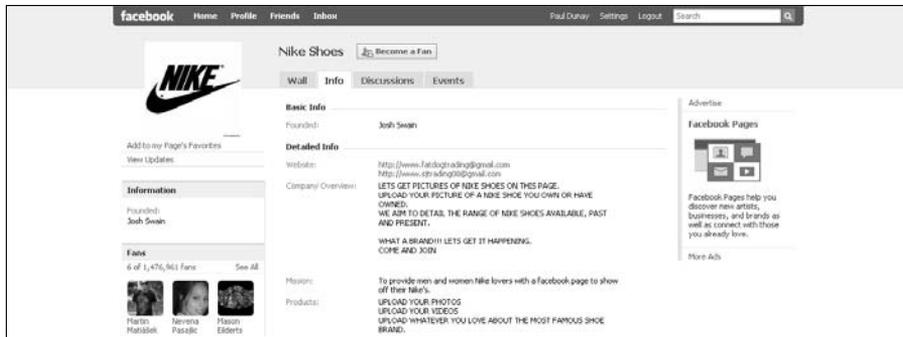
Crafting Your Message

Keep in mind when thinking about your business on Facebook that you are entering into an online conversation. So a traditional command and control message won't work.

An example of a command and control message is Nike's *Just Do It*, which is their ever popular tag line. If you search for *Nike* in Facebook, you'll notice that the most popular Nike site (Nike – Just do it) is not owned by Nike (see Figure 5-2). This is a real shift for marketers today — in the past we would have notified our legal department and shut the site down. Now we revel in the fact that we have Pages or Groups devoted to our brand that we don't have to update.

This exemplifies the spirit of Facebook and the way marketers on Facebook need to think. The question quickly becomes: What can you do to help these brand evangelists? Can you invite them to private screenings of your new movie, song, or video? Or, can you give them product to test before anyone on the market?

Figure 5-2:
One of Nike's most popular Pages, which is not owned by Nike.



The culture of Facebook was formed by young, digitally fluent adults who understand when they are being talked at (or commanded to Just Do something) versus engaging in a conversation. So, the key is not to interrupt them with messages, but to use the Facebook features to attract them to your message. By creating a steady stream of rich content, you can engage the right audience and get them to interact with your brand.

Discovering your voice

“Ahem.” (Cough.) “La la la la la la.”

Not that kind of voice. Marketers often talk about understanding the voice of the customer, what the customer values, but nowhere is this more important than in Facebook. Because Facebook is ultimately the expressions of its members, it makes sense to hear their needs before listening to the needs of the marketer’s business. Ultimately your voice is determined by your customers.



If you want to build trust and have a loyal following on Facebook, you have to become an active member of the community. Start discovering your voice by putting the needs of the community first, building content that gains their trust, and then engaging in honest dialog.

Open versus closed communication

Inside Facebook, the most powerful message is one delivered by one friend to another friend. This means that the marketer needs to ensure that every communication is as open and honest as possible.

Be as authentic as possible and quickly disclose any relationship that could be seen as borderline unethical. A relationship that can work against you undoubtedly will, so be careful.

A very public and notable example of this was a blog called walmartingacrossamerica.com. The issue wasn’t that the founders of the blog weren’t real brand enthusiasts of Wal-Mart, the issue was that Wal-Mart was paying for them to blog. The relationship was quickly discovered and worked against Wal-Mart. The point here — disclose any relationship that if printed on the front page of the newspaper would make you feel uneasy. This goes beyond Facebook — it’s a tenet of all good social behavior!

For more about Facebook Groups, see Chapter 7. We recommend being as open in your communications as possible, which may be more than you are comfortable with. That is okay, however, as that’s how it works on social networks. You have to jump in with both feet if you want to run with the crowd.

Applying Your Facebook Marketing Tactics

The toolkit for marketers on Facebook is a little different from the more traditional toolkit that marketers are used to. Advertising has been the traditional path of most marketers. But few marketers are finding that path successful today for a variety of reasons, including the cost of advertising and its effectiveness. Even though advertising is available on social networks like Facebook, it is not a guarantee of success. (See Chapter 9 to advertise on Facebook.)

While Facebook offers advertising as a way to reach out to your customer, it also includes tools that address the more viral nature of the social network. You can maintain a presence on the site (see Chapter 4) and distribute your content (see Chapter 6). To enhance your Page, you can add elaborate software apps (see Chapter 12). Why not hold a contest (see Chapter 13) or host an event (see Chapter 8)?

Presence

Even if you aren't completely ready to market your product or service, get a presence on Facebook. We highly recommend that you reserve your business or brand name before someone else takes it (see Chapter 4 to secure your company name on Facebook).

A Facebook presence, like having a Web site, is a fundamental tactic and should be on everyone's list of must haves. You might want to go ahead and secure your company name on other social sites, too, such as LinkedIn, FriendFeed, Delicious, and Twitter. Similar to the .dot com land grab that happened in the late 90s, secure your company name now for use later.

Advertising

Advertising on Facebook is unlike any other advertising experience you've had because of the unique ways you can precisely target an ad to a specific group of people. For example, if you want to target MBA graduates that are three to five years out of school and working in Southern California that like Rock music and whose favorite food is sushi — you can do that!

Facebook ads work similar to online banner ads, but try not to use them the same way. Most banner ads, when clicked, take you to a completely different site. In Facebook, however, although you can redirect members to your Web site, most users feel more comfortable staying within Facebook — and you want your users to feel comfortable!

Beyond that, Facebook ads are still made up of the basics: an image, some text, and a title. And ads on Facebook are purchased like banner ads, with pay for clicks (CPC) and pay for impressions (CPM) pricing. The big difference is that you can attach social actions to your ads to increase the relevance. Facebook is operating on tons of personal data that users have made available about them on Facebook. So, unlike Google, where you only have keywords to attach your ad to, Facebook makes all aspects of a user's social profile open for targeted ads. (See Chapter 9.)

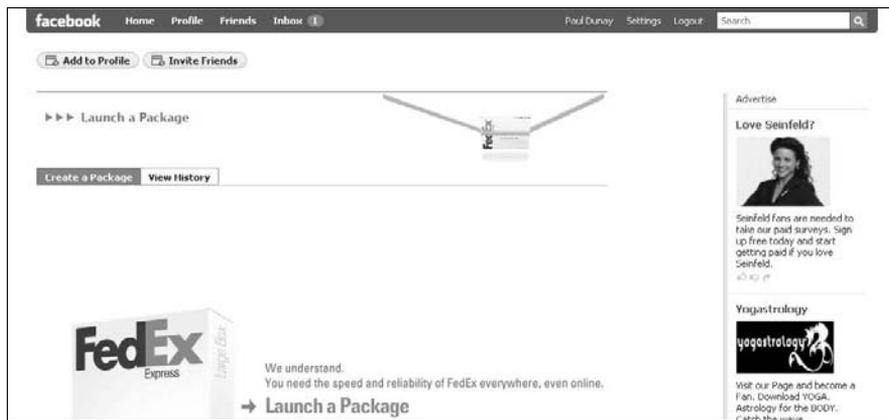
Applications

Facebook apps can be embedded in any Facebook Page or personal profile to distinguish your profile. You can think of them as interactive spaces that allow the user to get content, take a poll, play a game, or anything else you can dream up.

Creating a Facebook app has become widely popular because custom apps are not that hard or expensive to build. Some Facebook apps have seen tremendous growth because they were built to take advantage of the viral nature of Facebook. And new apps have been built to display advertising, giving birth to a whole new generation of advertising networks.

A great example that was well integrated into the Facebook site was the FedEx – Launch a Package app (see Figure 5-3). The app imitated the real world need to send a package fast, but using the Facebook platform. It was in line with the FedEx brand — simple, fast, and easy to use! See Chapter 12 to learn more about Facebook apps.

Figure 5-3:
Launching
a Package
with the
FedEx
Facebook
application.



Content syndication

Another tactic to consider, if you have a steady stream of content, is to use Facebook as an outpost for your content. If you already have a blog, podcast series, or video series, you can effectively attract your Facebook audience to interact with — therefore displaying — those assets. (See Chapter 6.)

You can syndicate content in a variety of ways on a Page, including:

- ✓ Importing blog posts with Notes
- ✓ Using the My Del.icio.us app to import bookmarks from your Delicious account
- ✓ Using the Simply RSS app to gather all the RSS feeds you're collecting on your company's Web site
- ✓ Editing your Links section to include blogs and Web sites you want to highlight, perhaps by employees or partners of your company
- ✓ Uploading photos, videos, and podcasts (MP3 files) to your Facebook Page



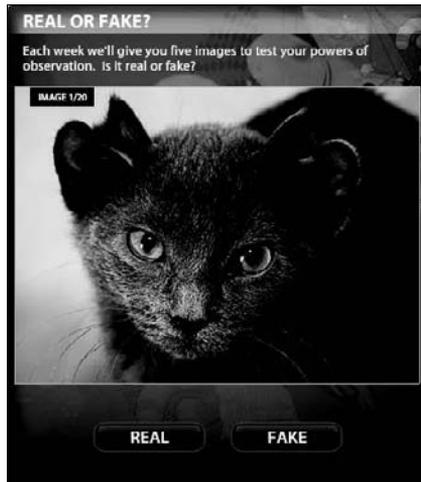
Don't forget to edit your Wall settings to include complete versions of all your blog posts so that they appear not only on your business Page, but also on the News Feeds of all your fans.

Contests

Okay, after you create a presence on Facebook, advertise your company, perhaps create a custom app (or just use existing apps) to dress up your Page, and pull in and syndicate all your content, you might want to kick your marketing campaign up a notch with a contest.

Facebook has no official Contest app, but a few enterprising companies jumped on this opportunity to create their own app to fill the need of marketers wanting to run contests (see Figure 5-4). Contests tap into human nature's competitive tendency and you can use them to help build your fan base, reward an existing fan base, or drive awareness of your brand. (See Chapter 13.)

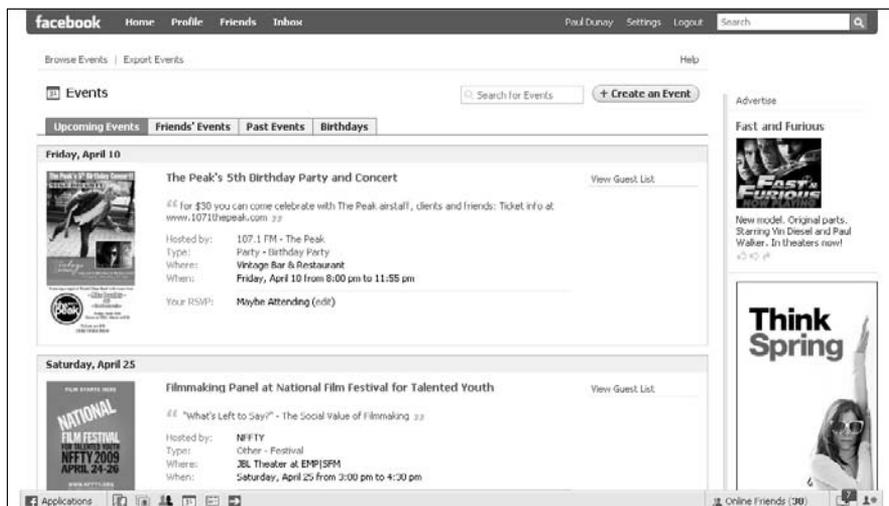
Figure 5-4:
The Adobe
Real or Fake
Facebook
interactive
game
gained the
company
6,000 new
fans.



Events

Facebook Events are a great way to get people together virtually, or in person, in support of your local business (see Figure 5-5). They are also an economical way of getting the word out beyond your normal in-house marketing list by inviting the fans of your Page or members of your Group. Fans can also help you promote your Facebook Event to their friends by sharing the Event if it seems of value to a group of their friends. (See Chapter 8.)

Figure 5-5:
Facebook
Events
manager
screen.



Integrating Your Online and Offline Campaigns

When you start to solidify your strategy, you may question what support systems and resources are needed, or wonder how to integrate your social network marketing strategy with your existing marketing plans. In this section, we make some suggestions on how to support the effort without overloading you or your marketing team, if that applies.

There is no reason you can't leverage your existing offline campaigns with a social network. But be sure you incorporate the campaigns into Facebook the right way. That is, include all elements of your campaign on Facebook. If you are throwing an Event, be sure to mention it on Facebook. If you are starting a campaign, mention it to your Facebook fans. Pretty much anything you are currently doing can be digitized and used on your Facebook Page.

- ✓ Face-to-face events can be promoted. (See Chapter 8.)
- ✓ Advertising campaigns can be adapted and used for Facebook ads. Just be sure to adapt the campaign to be more social and conversational. (See Chapter 9.)
- ✓ Products can be sold in the Facebook Marketplace. (See Chapter 12.)
- ✓ Contests can be adapted to have a social element and drive awareness of your brand. (See Chapter 13.)
- ✓ Research within Facebook can be compared to offline efforts. (See Chapter 14.)

Now you should be ready to get started promoting your Facebook Page (see Chapter 6). If you haven't yet created a Facebook Page, see Chapter 4. Be sure to evaluate your media budget and hire a writer exclusive to your online needs.

Deciding on a media budget

Believe it or not, the cost of the technology used for social network marketing is rather low. For example, a blog costs nothing to start, a podcast can cost up to \$2,000, a wiki can cost up to \$6,500 per year, and a video can cost up to \$15,000. Your own Facebook page is free but a private, branded app on Facebook can cost up to \$100,000.

But unlike traditional media — print, TV, and radio — which can cost big money, social networks' upfront costs are very little. A blog or Facebook Page costs nothing to start but the real cost is creating a steady stream of rich content to fill up these new media channels which is where the costs can get large.

We recommend dedicating up to 25 percent of your traditional media budget to non-traditional media. This gives you a healthy budget to experiment with for advertising, apps, contests, and creation of content to be successful in social networks such as Facebook.

Hiring an online writer

To create a steady stream of rich content that attracts the right audience, plan to have access to some additional, perhaps dedicated, writing resource for all your social content needs.

Social writing is a unique skill because the writing needs to be conversational. Headlines need to be provocative and entice the reader into wanting to know more. Above all, body copy needs to have a colloquial tone without a trace of sales or marketing speak.



We recommend hiring a separate writer for social network marketing content unless you happen to be one yourself.

Most people tend to think they can use the same writing resource for research papers, fact sheets, brochures, Web site copy, e-mail copy, and social content. This is a dangerous practice. Having someone who truly understands the medium can help tailor existing content, and writing new content helps to that ensure you always put your best foot forward.