

Month 1: Create the Plan and Get Started

Now that we've gone through all the basic background information you need, it's time to get started on a project. Getting your colleagues comfortable with social media and all it entails—the good and the bad—is a key factor for organizational buy-in and ultimately success. Remember, these projects involve a lot of trial and error. Your company and your management team have to be comfortable with that dynamic if you are going to have the flexibility you need to find a successful social media marketing strategy for your organization.

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Week 1: Lay the Groundwork

Early in any project, you really should be in fact-finding mode more than anything else. You should research what other people have done and look for examples of companies that execute well. Read everything you can about successful and failed campaigns. Remember that there are a lot of examples of both out there. You can find them by just searching to see what popular brands and your competitors are doing. The best and worst cases tend to get covered in the blogosphere. Week 1 is all about doing due diligence without even getting into the details of what Facebook or other social media services can do for you. Find out what your colleagues think and what people in the industry are saying about customer engagement via social media.

Monday: Set Project Goals

At the highest level, what are you trying to achieve with the project? We talked about a few of these opportunities earlier in the book—additional sales, increased revenue, lower marketing/customer engagement costs, improved customer service, collecting feedback quicker, and so on. Most of the time, you and your management team will want all of them, but you'll really need one or two. It's better to be selective about your goals and nail them than it is to try to solve every problem for every constituent in your business. Table 4.1 presents some of the types of things you can do with a social media campaign, how you would measure it, and examples.

► **Table 4.1** Examples of Opportunities in Social Media

Goal	Metrics	Example
Increased sales	Incremental revenue	Social media campaign launched specifically to sell/market products; URLs set up to identify social media as channel that found the customer
Improved customer service	Increased number of service queries handled, faster response time	Facebook fan page and Twitter account established for customers to ask questions of your business
Save money on marketing or advertising	Lower \$/touch vs. other marketing options	Facebook advertising campaign run to compare costs with traditional marketing efforts
Earn more blogger, journalist, or analyst attention	Number of blog posts mentioning the organization or product Number of articles written Number of analyst mentions	Informal engagement 1:1 with people active in social media (Facebook, Twitter, and so on) to inform them of a new product, service, or event

Then there is always the concept of *buzz*, which is the amorphous term used to broadly describe a palpable increase in the positive responses to a product or company in social media. You know that you're getting good buzz when you find that people are saying a lot about you and you haven't really done anything to force it. We find

that people use the term when they like what they see but don't quite understand why there is a positive response from customers or pundits in the marketplace. This isn't a criticism—you may conduct a campaign that doesn't immediately result in significant increases in your metrics only to find that, for whatever reason, there is considerably more buzz several weeks or months after the fact. Social media is a handy and relatively inexpensive way to introduce a concept to people well in advance of a product launch or a major marketing push. Buzz is the indirect benefit of those efforts.

Overall, if your company has been active on Facebook and social media, your company is probably more sophisticated at setting goals and measuring success. The bar to achieve success may be pretty high. If it's your first project, the goal may just be as simple as learning what to do and what to expect in the future. Learning is a perfectly reasonable goal, especially if you keep your costs low and your tolerance high.

When working with clients, we often ask them to visualize the 15-minute presentation they are giving to superiors to update them on the status of the project. How will that meeting go? What numbers will support your success? What specific results will help them understand that the project has been a success based on your strategy, your recommendations, and your effort? You know your management chain better than anyone else—it's best to think through their expectations at the beginning of a project so you can guide it to success.

Tuesday: Analyze Stakeholder Needs

Ideally, you'd take a full day here to interview key stakeholders to understand their perspectives. But if you're short on time, you may be able to learn just as much by putting together a questionnaire that your colleagues can answer easily via e-mail. Make a list of all the people who may be impacted even peripherally by your work on Facebook and social media. I'd be as inclusive as you can when compiling your list: people in your management chain, colleagues who work on different products, people in organizations that support the marketing or sales effort, and so on. The last thing you need is to be blindsided by influential colleagues who think they were not adequately consulted. These can be your harshest critics.

Start by putting a list of questions together. You want to understand how they view you, your project, your organization, your product, and the nature of the work. Some relevant questions to ask include the following:

- What does the person think of social media?
- Is the person an active Facebook or Twitter user?
- What are some of the company's best campaigns for dealing directly with customers?
- What opportunities does the company have to improve its customer engagement?
- What should your company be doing on social networks?
- What would social media success mean to them?

Then there are questions you probably don't want to ask directly but can impact the landscape of your project:

- If the person is an influencer on marketing decisions, does the person think that it is a waste of time?
- How will this project increase their workload? If so, are they aware of it, and are they prepared to deal with it?
- Does the person truly want to see the project succeed? Will the person be difficult when you need help advancing your project?
- Will you get the benefit of the doubt from this person in executive or management reviews?

You're doing a few things with the stakeholder analysis. First, you are comparing your assumptions on project goals/priorities to the perception of your colleagues. You may find that the goals you have set for the project are significantly different from the goals that other people have for the project. This is your opportunity to confront the differences and make a course correction if necessary. Second, you want to learn who your friends are within your company. Let's face it—all companies are in some ways political. Some people have authority; others either want it or think they deserve it. It's the nature of business today. You're probably aware of the political minefield in which you work, but it's better to extend the olive branch to as many people as you can as early as you can. You don't want to find out that certain people in your company have a political aversion to your work at the time when your success or failure is being judged. We generally advise middle managers to do what they can at this stage to build consensus around the project. It's a great way to give yourself enough time to learn as you go and get the benefit of the doubt should anything go sideways.

Wednesday: Analyze Customer Needs

Your work earlier this week to determine project goals and the motivations driving or influencing the project inside your company should begin to give you some ideas about campaigns. Now it's time to take all of that to the very people you rely upon to turn your idea into a marketing success. Granted, as a marketer, you should always be engaging with your customers to learn about their needs. But translating that to social media success can be a bit tricky. You'll need direct feedback from relatively disinterested customers in your target demographics to further understand the opportunities and limitations.

The best way to do this doesn't generally involve a lot of money. Do things that are relatively simple and almost immediately actionable. Find people you already know in your target demographics, and give them a cup of coffee or ice cream in exchange for a 30-minute chat. It's essentially your own focus group. If you'd rather have a larger set of opinions, create a survey on SurveyMonkey or a similar service. It's easy to get paralyzed by not having resources to conduct a professional, statistically valid study,

and sometimes there are good reasons to conduct such things. But this probably isn't one of those places. As we've mentioned in this book, the Web is the land of experimentation. Users will vote with their presence, and you'll see the results in the number of fans or followers you have, page views, unique users, comments, and so on. Your strategy should be to act on imperfect or incomplete data early in the project and be more reliant on mountains of data as the project matures.

When you get access to your subjects, you're going to have to ask them a lot of questions:

- What do they do on social networks?
- How much time do they spend on Facebook? How often do they log into Facebook? And what do they do once they get there?
- What annoys them about Facebook?
- Are they a Facebook fan or Twitter follower of companies? If so, which ones?
- Have friends shared recommendations on social media? If so, which ones stand out and why?
- What types of content, information, and so on, from the company would you be willing to share with your friends?

There are many more that are applicable to your specific situation. Before sitting down, come up with another three to five questions that can help validate ideas from you or your colleagues. Try not to let your own perceptions of the project or of feedback you've received get in the way of your learning. Be humble, and listen as best you can. Also leave some time for free-form feedback or suggestions. Oftentimes, some of the best ideas don't originate with your company but rather with your customers.

We should mention one other cautionary note here. It's really easy to take customer feedback and run with it full speed. After all, when we hear something from a customer, it's valid and "straight from the horse's mouth," right? Although that is true for the most part, you can't always trust that verbatim feedback to represent what customers really want. You have to map feedback to promises you can keep, both profitably and sustainably.

It's dangerous to listen too closely to what customers say they want. Remember the old Henry Ford quote: "If I'd asked my customers what they wanted, they'd have said 'a faster horse.'" Customers may not be aware of how technology can help them in new and innovative ways. It's your role to translate their feedback into new and interesting offerings that they'll love.



Thursday: Determine Work Roles

By now you've set your goals, and you've gotten feedback from internal stakeholders and customers. It's time to think through the operational mechanics that will make your Facebook marketing project sing. Regardless of the size of your business, there

are a wide range of roles and responsibilities associated with any project. Branding, messaging, design/creative, e-commerce, product management, website management, IT, and others all may have some role in the success or failure of your project. In small businesses, these roles may be filled by one or two people. But in corporations, you can have entire teams that work on one element of what you need. Like it or not, these people won't necessarily have the same priorities you have. So, you have to get them on your side.

The chart in the following sidebar illustrates how the role of social media champion is really suited for people who are well regarded inside their company. You'll regularly need to get the cooperation of your colleagues to do things they aren't necessarily resourced or equipped to do, often times on short notice. The job is one part visionary, one part marketer, one part politician. Do what you can to give people as much time as you can to help you. You have probably heard the quote "Failure to plan on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part." If you limit your emergencies to times when it's truly warranted, you'll gain the respect of your colleagues, and you'll probably get what you need more regularly.

Featured Case: Necessary Skill Sets

The size of your company will probably dictate the extent to which you have to court colleagues in other functional areas of your business. Social media projects are by definition cross-functional. To do things the right way, you're going to have to become the conductor who keeps the orchestra playing a harmonious tune.

What functions map to different parts of your organization? Here's an example from a recent client engagement. We dealt primarily with the manager of the social media project, but she had to deal with a variety of colleagues across her company:

Branding: Use of logos and brand assets

Design: Creation of new/modified image assets

Product management: Sign-off on the way the product was used

E-commerce: Coordination of the project with other online campaigns, e-mail marketing promotions, and so on

Website management: Campaigns on the Web that pointed to Facebook, and vice versa

For each of the roles mentioned above, do what you can to have a point person available to take requests, feedback, and so on. You really don't want the responsibilities to be ambiguous either—talk through the requirements, what people will need to do, and what the deadlines will likely be. You have to know who will do what, when,

and what the rules of engagement will be. If you are in a larger corporation, your work will likely be handed to a junior member of the team. But don't let that fool you: you'll have to keep that person and their manager happy to get their undying cooperation and love. Earlier in this book, we mentioned that you're truly building a social media product when you create a Facebook campaign. You're the product manager here, so you'll have to manage relationships as much as you'll have to manage the end product.

Friday: Set or Review Social Media Policy

As you navigate the political waters of your organization, you'll undoubtedly face questions about the organization's official policies regarding the execution of social media products. We're talking as much about who does what as who can edit Facebook on behalf of the company, who can comment on success or failure, who can access statistics and summary reports, and who is in the room for executive reviews.

If you are in a large corporation, odds are that you may already have some loose guidelines for blogging set forth by public relations people. This can be a good start—because such guidelines tend to reflect a company's treatment of risk, customer advocacy, and interaction. Put another way, some companies simply put more trust in their employees to make judgment calls that may ultimately reflect on the business. Others prefer a more centralized communications structure that closely manages company positioning. Smaller companies tend to have less complex rules about customer engagement for a few reasons. They tend to be scrappier and more action-oriented. In our experience, this has a lot to do with the fact that larger companies are generally more risk-averse because they are “under the microscope” more than their smaller brethren.

What you really want to do here is make sure your team is on the same page across blogs *and* social media. Although we're not huge fans of “makework,” (that is, unproductive work done primarily for the sake of satisfying process) an e-mail or document that summarizes the basics can be very helpful to keep you from having arguments or misunderstandings as your campaign evolves. Here are a few questions to consider when putting together your company's policy on social media:

- What are the official social media accounts for the company?
- Who manages them?
- How often will you post updates from the different accounts?
- What types of content will be shared from the different social media destinations?
- Will the social media account engage in conversation with users?
- When posting news and updates, which accounts have priority?
- What are the loose rules for how the Web, blogs, and social media interact?

Now, you know your organization a lot better than we do. Some companies manage their brand and outbound communications very closely, while others have a more decentralized approach. Think Proctor & Gamble on one hand and Southwest Airlines on the other. It really comes down to philosophy for a lot of businesses. Where your company or organization stands will drive a lot of other factors:

- Whether you will need a stated policy for information shared via social media
- Whether you will communicate with customers directly via social media
- Whether the Facebook presence is managed in-house, by a trusted vendor or consultant, or by a combination of both
- The degree to which updates to the Facebook presence must be approved in advance due to fear of offending parts of the customer base—either accidentally or on purpose
- Whether you should promote your product, your brand, or your company

We have worked with organizations that first spend a lot of time on an “official social media policy” that drives what they can and can’t do. And we’ve worked with others that simply shoot from the hip and worry about problems as they come along. If you don’t have such a policy, spend your hour today to create a basic framework that establishes some rules. Think of a few difficult situations you may encounter—a difficult customer, a question you don’t want to answer, verbal abuse, and so on—and think about the most appropriate response that fits your company’s culture. Make your Facebook marketing project fit the cultural norms of your organization, lest your misunderstanding cost you professionally.

Week 2: Draft and Present the Plan

You’ve spent the last week gathering information from your colleagues, customers, and management. By now you should know your limitations for the project, and you should begin to see some specific opportunities. You must put your thoughts into a coherent package that can help you start the project.

We’ve alluded to this several times in the book, but we can’t overstate that success relies on your ability to set up a structure by which you can experiment. No two projects are alike—what works for your brand may not work for someone else’s, and vice versa. The problem is that you won’t know going into your project if your approach will be naturally viral, if it will require demand generation via advertising, if your lighthearted approach works with consumers, or if you need to deliver “just the facts.” You may have a hunch of how things will work, but you need freedom to learn and react to customer feedback.

Featured Case: Bad Reactions to Social Media Policy from the Sports World

Sometimes, the reaction to an organization's social media policy can take on a life of its own. Take, for example, the case of ESPN in August 2009. ESPN released a social media policy that is by all accounts pretty fair. ESPN reporters are, in fact, as much representatives of the network as they are individuals—and their social media policy was set accordingly. But one commentator, NBA analyst Ric Bucher, sent a message via Twitter that said ESPN had “prohibited [employees and commentators from] Tweeting unless it serves ESPN.” The result was a PR nightmare for the “total sports network,” and it sent its PR team into quick action the same day. Nonetheless, the blogosphere lit up with a number of critical posts suggesting that the network doesn't care about fans and wants to control the sports industry. Check out <http://mashable.com/2009/08/04/espn-social-media> for the full text of the policy along with ESPN's official response.

Also in the sports world, the Southeastern Conference of college athletics in the United States released a similarly restrictive social media policy later in August 2009. According to the policy, ticketed fans can't “produce or disseminate (or aid in producing or disseminating) any material or information about the Event, including, but not limited to, any account, description, picture, video, audio, reproduction or other information concerning the Event.”

Uproar against this policy ultimately led to its revision 11 days after the policy was released.

What is the reason for all the wrangling over social media in the sports world? Two words: money and control. The only problem is that attendees and consumers today are the same people who insist on sharing their experiences with friends through social media. The consumer is an active participant in social media culture. Keep that in mind as you craft your own social media policy for your employees and your customers moving forward.

Monday: Research Best Practices and Success Stories

Although Facebook is relatively young as a platform, in 2010 and beyond you have the advantage of hindsight. A lot of companies have gone before you to create a Facebook presence. Some have failed; others have enjoyed wild success. Some companies have done very well by letting their communities manage themselves. Before you put pen to paper, you'll want to know more about what has been done in the past. You have to know as much as you can, because these stories oftentimes reach the newsstands, the popular business periodicals, and the blogosphere. You'll get a lot more credibility in your company if you are the expert and not a colleague who just keeps up with business news.

A variety of sources keep up with innovations in Facebook and social media marketing. Some of our favorites are listed here. You'll want to look for sources that can keep you up-to-date on the latest creative uses of Facebook or social media. We cover some of these in this book and on our blog, but you'll want to keep up with a few sources so you can bring the world's best work to your specific situation.

Facebook Marketing: An Hour a Day: www.facebookmarketinganhouraday.com

Mashable: www.mashable.com

AllFacebook: www.allfacebook.com

Inside Facebook: www.insidefacebook.com

Social Media Examiner: <http://socialmediaexaminer.com>

Government 2.0: www.govloop.com, <http://radar.oreilly.com/markd>

Enterprise 2.0: www.web-strategist.com

It's handy to read blogs from practitioners in your field. Ironically, Facebook isn't the easiest way to get familiar with content from bloggers and other industry pundits who you did not know previously. Industry magazines, business magazines, trade shows, Twitter, and search engines are good ways to help you discover some of these people. Once you start digging, you'll find that a lot of experts are grappling with the same issues you face every day. Most are relatively open with their experience and their advice—and they share it at low cost or free on the Internet and on their blogs. Thank God for the Web!

Tuesday: Assess the Social Media Activity of Competitors

Before launching your own presence, you really should know exactly what your competitors are doing on Facebook and other social media sites. If you're going to comprehensively analyze your competitors' activities, consider staying on top of the following:

Features Keep track of all the elements of the competitors' presence that appear to be run or officially sponsored by them. You need to know whether they are maintaining a profile, Facebook fan pages, Twitter accounts, blogs, or other social media accounts. Since social media sites typically rank high on search engines, you shouldn't have any trouble finding these sites with a search engine.

Commitment Monitor the quantity and quality of social media updates. Is the competitor truly committed to social media for customer outreach, or does it appear to be more of an experiment? Objectively speaking, would you consider their effort a competitive differentiator, or is it just the bare minimum necessary for a company these days?

Popularity Keep track of the number of customers who appear to be communicating with your competitor. This can be a simple metric such as the number of fans/followers/friends/participants they've attracted, or you can dig deeper to see how much

“conversation” they have with their customers via social media. This is good to give yourself a benchmark for performance—either as a stated goal or as a personal goal.

PR/coverage Analyze how much your competitor’s social media work is discussed through articles, in popular periodicals, by bloggers, and so on. It’s been said that there is no such thing as bad publicity. We guess that depends on your risk tolerance. A good campaign or strategy can get a lot of people saying good things about a company. When looking for this, be sure to discern between a competitor’s own employees talking about the social media effort and seemingly disinterested third parties doing so. It’s far too easy to appear anonymous on the Web—sophisticated competitors will plant moles around the Web to say good things about themselves to make it all more impactful.

A chart that summarizes all this data is a helpful and important resource that you can use to both benchmark yourself and monitor the playing field in the future. If you’ve effectively gathered the data, you’ve built the scorecard as it relates to your competitors. Now, your management may not hold you to that high a standard or your competitors may not be executing well, so the numbers are largely irrelevant. But as long as you know where your competitors are, you’ll be much more informed when setting goals and positioning your progress. Spend a little time to put this chart together with as many hard metrics as you can find. Leave the subjectivity to perhaps only your assessment of PR. You’ll need a snapshot at the beginning of your project and the commitment to update it regularly. Add your performance to the chart to be honest about how you stack up.

Wednesday: Assign Metrics

As you’re finalizing your proposal, you need to spend some time thinking about scorekeeping. How will your superiors know with confidence that you are successful? This comes down to a few things—what numbers you’ll share with them, how often you’ll share updates, and how you’ll manage expectations.

It always starts with the sophistication of the people ultimately responsible for the effort and what they expect to see. Ideally you spent time last week talking with them in detail. Getting everyone on the same page is important—so it’s probably a good idea to go back to the most influential stakeholders to get feedback on your plan. Give them an opportunity to own part of the project through suggestion or advice, and they’ll be easier on you when times are tough.

Choosing metrics for your scorecard is one part art, one part science. You certainly want to fill it with numbers that you know you can affect, but your management chain will likely want to tie the scorecard to meaningful business metrics: return on investment, low customer acquisition cost, number of fans/subscribers, how you do relative to your competitors, and so on. A good scorecard will have elements of both that will easily demonstrate a few things: maintenance, capturing opportunity, efficient

advertising spend, competitive environment, and customer interaction. Figure 4.1 shows a range of popular metrics and how easy or difficult they are to affect today.

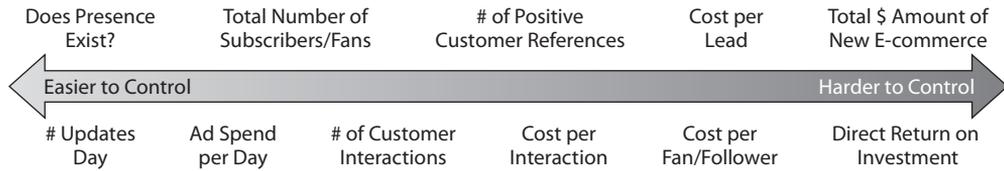


Figure 4.1 The continuum of social metrics

Table 4.2 shows an effective scorecard for a simple Facebook marketing campaign that utilizes Facebook fan pages and Facebook advertising. The first two metrics are entirely based on effort and measure simply whether the project manager did their job. The third metric, number of fans added, is a measure of the overall effectiveness of the effort as measured by incremental fans. Advertising spend tells you whether the manager stayed within budget. The number of customer interactions per week is a measure of how engaging the effort is and whether there is sufficient follow-up with customers. Advertising cost per fan is a customer acquisition cost metric that determines whether the ad spend is effective. This is an admittedly simplistic measure—we’ll talk in Chapter 6 about isolating the exact impact of advertising dollars. Finally, the ratio of total number of fans to a competitor’s total number of fans tells you how you compare to other companies in your market.

► **Table 4.2** Example of a Basic Facebook Marketing Scorecard

Metric	Last Week	Goal	This Week	Goal
Daily updates of scorecard/metrics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of updates or posts/day	0.7	1.0	1.1	1.0
Number of Facebook fans added	77	80	106	90
Advertising spend	\$37.28	\$40.00	\$39.15	\$40.00
Number of customer interactions per week	13	25	19	30
Advertising cost per fan	\$0.484	\$0.50	\$0.369	\$0.44
Ratio of our total number of fans to competitor’s total number of fans	1.03:1	1:0:1	1.07:1	1.05:1

You should know two additional things about metrics and your scorecard. First, you and your management team should consider all of this to be somewhat fluid, especially early in the process. As you work on the project, you may determine that some metrics matter more to you and others matter less. This is a learning experience for many people who take on such projects for the first time—it’s OK to make a mistake or course-correct as you learn.

Second, the spirit of the scorecard isn't that you necessarily get locked in to doing things just because they're on a scorecard but rather that you get in the habit of recording and analyzing relevant data about your efforts. These projects generate mountains of discrete pieces of data, and you can use this data to help drive decision making as long as you commit to recording it regularly. It can be tedious, but it's very worthwhile. Some data is available to you long-term, but Facebook discards other types of data such that you can't go back to get it if you forget to record it. Use spreadsheets to record progress and analyze data, and collect as much of that data as you can, even if you don't think it will be immediately helpful. You never know what you'll want to use later.

Thursday: Set Reporting Strategy

Now you'll turn your attention to the how and when of reporting metrics to your superiors. The funny thing about Internet marketing is that even in 2010 a lot of managers aren't experienced enough to know the ins and outs of reportage. As a result, every statistic that you report could turn into a potential black hole of debate that may be totally unproductive. This may also make people question your work or how you are analyzing progress.

Getting out in front of these issues is key to managing perceptions, and education is the way to do it. Take the time to educate people on what key metrics mean—it will go a long way to improving your internal credibility. It also shows people that you have nothing to hide, which will come in handy especially if you do have some metrics that you need more time to improve. At the end of the day, you want people to understand that you can measure your progress, you can be self-critical, and you know how to fix problems that emerge.

When establishing the reporting cadence, think through the ongoing reporting need and the frequency of management reviews. You will probably need to share updates with some of your colleagues on an ongoing basis so they are always in the loop. This is most efficiently handled on a weekly basis, although we have seen cases where a small team gets daily updates on progress. Management reviews should be scheduled monthly at the most—otherwise, you won't have time to see the outcome of inevitable changes or corrections to your strategy and tactics. The frequency and depth of your reporting will be driven by management requirements and how critical the project is in your company.

If you communicate proactively and openly, you're doing everything you can to manage expectations and reactions to your work. We see people run into problems in their company all the time when they hoard information or don't ensure that management understands the goals, the measurement, and the process of establishing a healthy social media campaign. Deal with issues directly as they occur, and be open to feedback. Distrust is created when people don't communicate—you have a leadership role to play as the manager of the social media project.

Friday: Present the Plan

You've spent most of the last two weeks gathering information, negotiating with stakeholders, and preparing a plan to help your company take better advantage of Facebook and social media. Now it's time to sell it. We've talked at length about the value of metrics and the importance of communication to get cooperation from your colleagues. Here are a few other potential potholes that you should consider as you summarize your thoughts:

Management/mitigation of unintended consequences Good executives at major corporations are trained to mitigate risk wherever possible. You'll need to show that you've thought through all the potential negative situations that may arise from your effort and that you have a plan for dealing with problems and unintended negative consequences.

Organizational fit Are you the right person in the company to run the project? Would this cause a political problem in your company that will create problems for the management team? Have you reached across organizational lines proactively to make the project run as smoothly as possible? Will the project be at odds with other major initiatives inside the company? You don't want to compete with your colleagues unless there are good reasons to do so.

Fit with corporate culture/norms Are the things you are proposing a fit for the way the company communicates with customers, partners, and so on? If so, is that a good thing? Management may have a different perspective on this than the rank and file. Be sure to understand how superiors see the opportunity in advance of your presentation.

Future commitment Will this project cause the company to take on a future financial or head count liability that it currently does not have? Do you have a handle on the costs associated with the effort and how that may change over time? Could backing out of such a commitment cause customers significant consternation and create negative perceptions about the company or brand?

If they are balanced and fair, your superiors will likely ask you for a good balance of metrics that you can control and stretch goals that will make you really work. That's OK. Remember, you are trying to learn what will work and what has worked on Facebook. ROI is certainly the toughest metric to guarantee today—more on that in Chapter 10, "Organizational Considerations," when we talk about what managers and executives should demand of employees who run social media projects.

One Final Point for the Day of Your Presentation

Be sure to keep your cool when you pitch your ideas. Not all of your ideas are going to necessarily work. That's OK. React calmly and professionally to feedback. It's the best way to make people confident that you can take feedback and you can do the job!

Week 3: Establish a Presence with the Facebook Profile and Friends

Congratulations! Now that you have a plan and you’ve taken feedback from the firing line of your management team, it’s time to execute! You’re probably already very familiar with the basics of Facebook, but you may never have looked at all the opportunities from a business perspective. We did a quick walk-through of the basics of the Facebook profile and friending in Chapter 2, “What Is Facebook?”—now we’ll talk about these features with an eye toward marketing opportunities. We’ll avoid feature walk-throughs as much as possible here, to focus on how different elements of Facebook help you create a campaign that your customers will appreciate.

Monday/Tuesday: Learn About Data in the Facebook Profile and Security Settings

As we’ve discussed previously, everything about your identity is summarized in the Facebook profile. There, you have the ability to say as much or as little as you want about yourself. Table 4.3 summarizes the personal information users may expose about themselves. It is a ridiculously rich set of data, most of which is accessible to marketers for better targeting through Facebook advertising, which we will cover in detail in Chapter 6, “Month 3: Creating a Following with Facebook Ads.”

► **Table 4.3** Facebook User Information

Category	Data Listed
Basic Information	Gender
	Birth date
	Hometown
	Neighborhood
	Family Members
	Relationship Status
	“Interested In”
	“Looking For”
	Political Views
	Religious Views
Personal Information	Activities
	Interests
	Favorite Music
	Favorite TV Shows
	Favorite Movies
	Favorite Books
	Favorite Quotations
	About Me

Continues

► **Table 4.3** Facebook User Information (Continued)

Category	Data Listed
Contact Information	E-mail Instant Messenger Screen Names Mobile Phone Number Land Phone Address City/Town Neighborhood Zip Website
Education and Work	College/University Graduation Year Concentration/Major Degree Attained High School Employer Position Job Description City/Town Dates Worked
Groups	Facebook groups to which the user belongs
Pages	Facebook pages for which the user is a fan

The downside to collecting all this information is that it may make a user nervous. Think about it—if the Facebook profile is totally filled out, it contains quite a bit of personal information that is often used in sensitive situations such as when you’ve forgotten your password for a credit card or when old friends you haven’t seen in years want to reconnect. It’s perfect for criminals who may want to steal someone’s identity or use profile data to impersonate that person or act maliciously on behalf of that person.

Facebook established a rich set of data privacy controls with privacy settings for limiting exposure of certain types of information to certain people on Facebook—friends, friends of friends, people in certain networks, nobody at all, and so on. All of this was done to make users more comfortable when adding life’s personal details into the social network. Figure 4.2 shows the available privacy options. Users can also customize the privacy they want on a user-by-user basis if they are particularly concerned about certain individuals. Facebook truly has done a remarkable job of simplifying a user’s management of their own personal data.

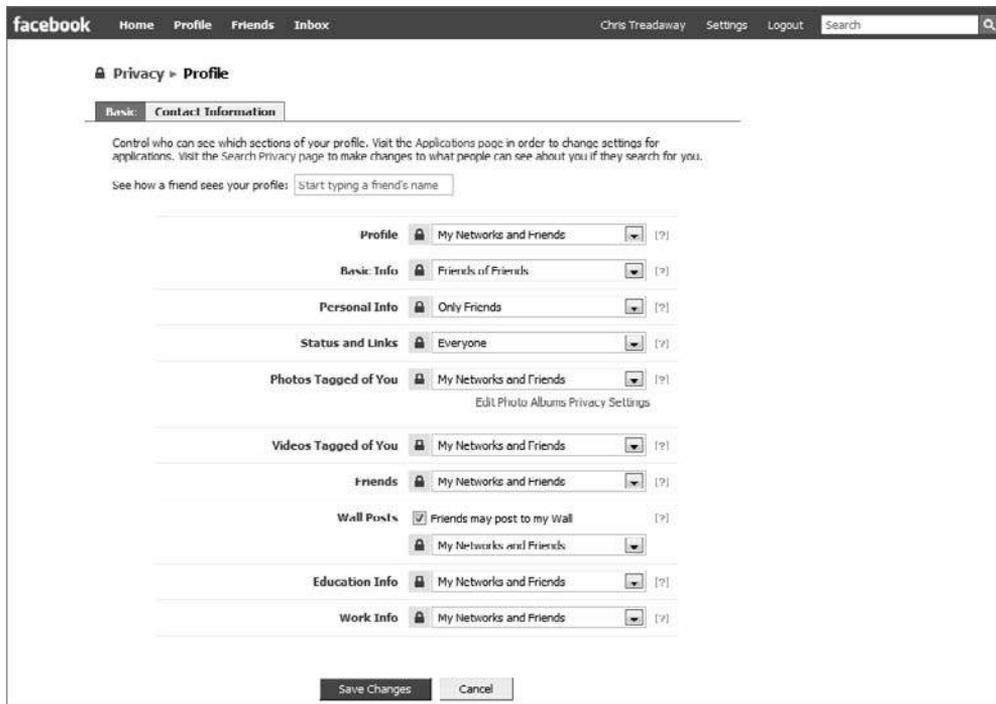


Figure 4.2 Facebook privacy settings

All of it means a few things for marketers:

- You simply won't be able to access some people who are more careful with the data they share on Facebook.
- However, most Facebook users, by virtue of adding self-identifying data to their profiles, are by default exposing themselves to marketing offers.
- Facebook has an unbelievably rich set of demographic and behavioral data on its users, and that data will likely play a major role in the future of Facebook advertising and marketing on the platform.

In the sense that Facebook can gather accurate and up-to-date demographic targeting data from users, Facebook has only a few rivals (Google, Yahoo, Twitter, maybe Microsoft, and a few others).

Wednesday: Decide How You'll Use Your Facebook Profile

If you already have a Facebook profile, you'll need to decide whether you want that profile to do "double duty" as your own personal profile *and* the profile that serves as the administrator account for the corporate presence (a fan page, group, and so on). If

you do choose to have your personal profile be the Admin for the company fan page, we strongly recommend adding one or more additional Admins to share the “load” of accessing and managing the company fan page. Even though Facebook insists on connecting a personal profile to a fan page, they are still treated as two entirely separate entities and no one would ever know you are the Admin. Having said that, if you wanted to post content on the company fan page as yourself, you would not be able to do so without first being removed as an Admin. It can get complex, and many marketers on Facebook have come up with creative workarounds, including setting up “dummy accounts,” which technically is against Facebook’s Terms of Use.

Alternatively, you may want to set up a Business Account for your company to be the Admin of the fan page. A Business Account provides extremely limited access to Facebook’s main features; however, it can be the best solution to avoid having your personal profile tied into the company fan page. Don’t worry so much about data flow, getting on News Feeds, posting pictures, and so on right now because those are not unique benefits to the Facebook profile. This is really about whether you want to use the Facebook profile to include a personal touch complete with personal details and relationships that develop over time with real people. Facebook allows users to have up to 5,000 friends on their personal profile. You may end up being friends with a wide range of people, including your own immediate and extended family members, real personal friends, colleagues, prospective customers, industry experts, media contacts, and more. Make sure that your choices regarding the Facebook profile fit what you need to achieve and, if applicable, the brand assets you already have and the commitments you are willing to make in the future.

Machiavellian types may be thinking by now, “Facebook exposes so much data, I can use it to learn about people I work with or those I want to target.” Customers, partners, or other types of business contacts often share a lot of information about themselves through Facebook. If they’ve friended you directly, you can see most of this information. Similarly, data is available if you’ve worked at the same place in the past and you both are on the same company network.

There are also more circuitous ways to get access to content people share on Facebook. If they’ve posted a picture on one of your friend’s profiles, depending on how the two parties have their privacy settings configured, you could go through all the pictures in that particular photo album. If they’ve posted a status update, you can find it using Facebook’s Status Update search, which was developed as a means to compete with Twitter’s search (<http://search.twitter.com>). Despite the wealth of privacy and security settings in Facebook, there are still a number of workarounds like this that allow unintended people to see personal profile data. A great salesperson can use little things found in the Facebook profile to better empathize with a sales target and ultimately win them over. Facebook provides the vehicle by which people share a lot of information that can be used as business intelligence for a business advantage.

Similarly, you can also use the Facebook profile to create whatever persona you want. There are thousands upon thousands of organizations to follow, groups to join, and links to post. Everything you do, say, and associate with paints a picture of who you are—and those little things can certainly impact how business contacts perceive you. If you have friended customers, partners, or other types of business contacts, your Facebook presence can be used to keep them up-to-date just like you do for friends. Similarly, you can share articles, photos, or other types of content that you think may influence them in some way. In essence, you can deliberately manage how your Facebook community at large perceives you. By being mindful and strategic about what you share, you may find yourself making friends with very key contacts and deepening your relationship with these individuals. It's really up to you to determine just how aggressively you'd like to use your own Facebook profile to talk about your business or market yourself to prospective customers. We do recommend making use of Friend Lists to manage a) how you filter your own News Feed and b) who gets to see which posts via your privacy settings.

Thursday: Set Up Your Profile and Make Friends for a Consumer Campaign

We briefly discussed friending in Chapter 2 to make you familiar with the basics of how people interact on Facebook. Now we'll talk about it as it relates to a consumer campaign. You really have two options when it comes to creating a Facebook profile to support a consumer campaign. You may want an actual person to be the focal point of a campaign to personalize your organization and to give the appearance of humanity and being approachable. If so, you'll have a fairly loose policy about friending, and you'll want to watch activity on the Wall to ensure that people don't abuse the privilege of communicating directly with you.

One such example of this that took place in social media was the rise of Robert Scoble. Scoble was an early blogger and technical evangelist employed by Microsoft to showcase the company, its products, and its people. His blog, Scobleizer (www.scobleizer.com), became a tremendous hit and a "must read" for anyone wanting to keep up with startups and new Internet technologies. But just over three years after taking the job at Microsoft, Robert Scoble announced he was leaving the company to join a startup. The face of Microsoft's technical evangelism efforts was all of a sudden gone.

On one hand, Scoble's efforts worked really well to personalize Microsoft and soften the software giant's image. On the other hand, it also exposed a real weakness in allowing a single person to have such an influential role. When a single person has such a significant impact as the face of an organization, it can be devastating when that person leaves. The person can take with them the brand that has been created and the audience that follows religiously.

The second option you have is to establish a fictional character for a campaign. A fictional character on Facebook appears and acts just like a real person who

can travel, update their status, share pictures, comment on current events, and so on. Similarly, that character can “friend” individual Facebook users and also accept friend requests. When a user becomes a friend of another Facebook user, a notification appears on the News Feed of each person’s friends. It’s a quick and viral way for people to find out that a new friend from a previous social context has joined Facebook.

Actions taken by the fictional character will appear on friends’ News Feeds, where they can be acted upon, commented on, shared, or “liked.” When friends of your fictional character do any of these things, a notification will appear on their profile and the News Feed of their friends. It doesn’t take a lot of imagination to realize that this can be one heck of a viral benefit to you. What product manager at McDonald’s wouldn’t want the ability to establish the Hamburglar as a living character on Facebook with thousands of fans eager to hear about how he’s going to get his next McDonald’s hamburger? Sadly, this is exactly what Facebook is trying to avoid by restricting the presence of fictional characters on the News Feed. We’re a big proponent of testing the limits—what’s the worst that can happen? Facebook will shut you down? Well, it actually happened, as described in the “The Hard-Knock Life of Dummies Man” case study.

Featured Case: The Hard-Knock Life of Dummies Man

In the summer of 2007, Ellen Gerstein, marketing director for Wiley Publishing, had a great idea for marketing the *For Dummies* books. She thought she’d create a Facebook profile for “Dummies Man” to make the brand and *For Dummies* books more personal. She was totally unprepared for what happened next—Facebook shut down the Dummies Man account not long after its launch. Here’s a quick Q&A with Ellen, where she shares her experience:

Q: *So, what exactly happened when you tried to create a profile for Dummies Man?*

A: The idea to create a profile for Dummies Man came about when I was working with Joe Laurino, our summer intern, on some Facebook marketing ideas. I casually mentioned that it would be fun for Dummies Man to have a Facebook persona. Joe ran with the idea and created a profile for him based on his likes (helping people learn new things), dislikes (idiots), and so on. He also added a bunch of information about our publications in there as a way to showcase some new books. It seemed really fun, and we got a lot of people at work curious and interested in Facebook as a result.

Q: *What were you trying to achieve with a Dummies Man profile that you couldn’t achieve with a Facebook page?*

A: The idea was to make Dummies Man accessible to readers in a way that only social media allows you to do. You can connect with him, share book ideas with him, even throw sheep at him! We wanted to take this to readers in a very personal way that we had not tried before.

Q: *Did you ever get a chance to make your case directly to people at Facebook regarding the profile?*

A: One day, I tried to log into the account and was denied. After a fair amount of legwork, it showed that the profile was suspended because the person who set up the account (me) was not using her real name. I tried reaching out to a few contacts at Facebook but was directed to write to the automated customer service e-mail addresses on the site.

Although I may have felt this wasn't fair, I totally acknowledge that this was within Facebook's right as laid out in its terms of service agreement. It's their sandbox, and if I don't like how they are playing, my recourse is to pick up my pail and shovel and go home. I understand that. What did anger me was that Dummies Man was singled out, while others having profiles not under their real names were not shut down. Not to pick on him, as I am a fan, but the example I brought to the attention of Facebook was that of Fake Steve Jobs. How can you say that "Fake Steve Jobs" is someone's real name? How was he (Dan Lyons) allowed to keep that account and not Dummies Man? I wasn't trying to bring down Fake Steve Jobs but rather to make the case that we both had a place on Facebook.

Q: *In retrospect, do you think that all of this proved to help your company? Or was it harmful?*

A: I think both the benefits and the damage were minimal. We got some play in the blogosphere about it and were able to get a bit more press out of it when Robert Scoble's profile was removed from the site (<http://scobleizer.com/2008/01/03/ive-been-kicked-off-of-facebook>). I think it showed most of all that Wiley cared enough about social media as a means of connecting with customers that we were trying something new, even if it ended up being something we got our wrists slapped for, however lightly.

Q: *How does it feel to pave the way for other companies to put their fictional characters on Facebook?*

A: I think Facebook has lightened up and made it easier to have that presence, while still maintaining the overall feel they intended to have. As long as you are generally respectful of what Facebook is trying to do, I think it's great to have fictional characters on there. It's what social media was made for!

For more on social media and observations on the publishing industry, check out Ellen's blog at <http://trueconfessions.wordpress.com>.

This isn't always a positive, however—it's just as easy for someone to hijack your brand by creating a phony profile that you *don't* control. Figure 4.3 is an example of the search results for profiles of "The Most Interesting Man in the World," a fictional character that was the face of Dos Equis marketing in 2008–2009. Presumably few of these are not endorsed or managed by our good friends at Dos Equis. Imagine for a

moment what a malicious person can do by managing such a profile, friending a large number of people, and saying whatever they want in an effort to propagate messages virally on individuals' News Feeds. This may horrify you, but sadly there isn't a lot you can do about it short of contacting Facebook or any other social network where your fictional character is hijacked. It certainly warrants monitoring at minimum, and fortunately this can be done rather easily by friending rogue accounts to make sure they aren't misusing your character. But you may want to go to the extent of shutting down people who create these accounts entirely. Your company's philosophy on its brands will be a good guide for how you should treat these situations should they emerge.

"Overfriending" means different things to different people. It could be getting too close to perfect strangers. For others, it could be a matter of accepting or sending in the region of more than, say, fifty friend requests a day. Facebook doesn't publish these limitations but anecdotally we have found sending no more than around twenty outgoing friend requests per day keeps you under the radar. If you're including a personal greeting (which we recommend), try changing up the wording a bit, as Facebook's bots are looking for repetitive, verbatim wording.

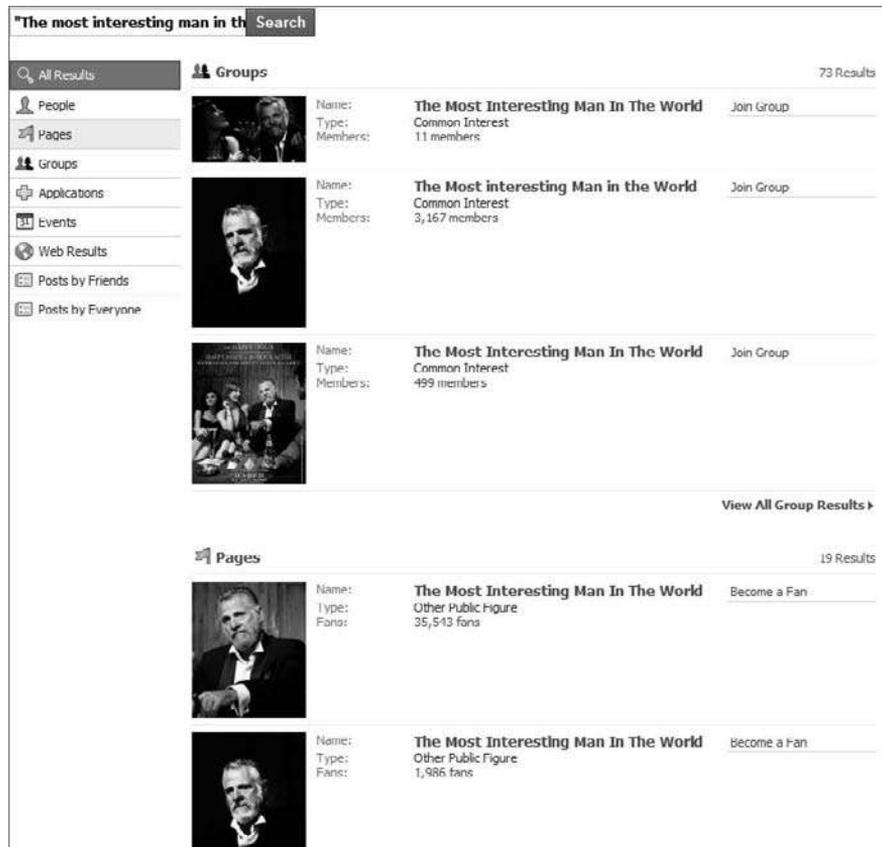


Figure 4.3 Search results for Dos Equis

Watch Out for “Overfriending”

Chris Treadaway’s retiree father developed quite an addiction to Zynga’s popular Facebook game Mafia Wars. He played every day for months, gradually building up his character and the size of his “family.” In the course of doing so, he started begging his immediate Facebook friends to join his Mafia. But that wasn’t enough, so he relaxed his rules for friending people on Facebook. Before long, he started friending random strangers on Facebook just to have a bigger and better Mafia.

One day, Facebook decided to shut down his account. No reason was given—he just couldn’t log in to Facebook with his e-mail address and password any longer.

Weeks turned into months until he finally got a response from Facebook. His account was suspended because of “suspicious friending activity.” Facebook reluctantly activated his account again, but not without a bit of anxiety and frustration.

What’s the moral of the story here? Don’t “overfriend.” Facebook is watching, and it’ll shut down an account that appears to be overzealous. But if you do want a loyal Mafia Wars member on your team, go ahead and friend Clifford Treadaway.

One solution to growing a friend base quicker is to use other marketing mediums to ask people to friend you. There’s no limit to how many incoming friend requests you can have. Internet marketer, John Reese, holds the record for reaching the 5,000 friends max in the shortest amount of time: a mere five days. How did he do it? He simply sent a message to his sizeable opt-in e-mail list asking his subscribers to add him as a friend on Facebook. Of course, this brought in a flood of new accounts to Facebook as many of these people did not yet have Facebook accounts. There are pros and cons to asking your existing database to friend you: if, like Reese, you have a sizeable database, you may use up your friend “slots” with people already in your reach. So, you might want to save some of those slots to establish relationships with new people.

Friday: Repurpose a Profile for Business

Alternatively, your interest in Facebook may be to sell products or services on a business-to-business basis, or you may be selling products to consumers that involve a longer sales cycle and require more consultation. That’s the realm of business development, where relationships built over a long period of time matter. Business development tends to imply more “strategic sales,” in other words, higher touch, more surgical, higher-stakes interactions with people who make big decisions that can impact your success or failure. Social media is a fantastic tool for business development. It breaks down communications barriers that were the rule of the day just 10 years ago. It gives

you low risk and potentially helpful excuses for interacting much more casually and much more regularly with prospective partners. It also exposes the social side of our lives, which may be helpful in a sales context. Not only that, but it can help you learn more about the very people you are trying to sell to—their thoughts, concerns, likes/dislikes, and so on.

First things first, you need to decide whether this is a good opportunity for you and your organization. Will your customers or partners be willing to engage with you on Facebook? How will they view your friend request? Will they be threatened or amused by your occasional comments and activities on the social network? By creating Friend Lists and adjusting your Privacy settings to your liking, using these Friend Lists, (e.g., determining who can and cannot see what content), you can easily control how your business-related posts and personal sharing are propagated. Using your Facebook profile for business development is dangerous because unless you use a duplicate profile for business activities or you carefully sanitize everything you say and do on Facebook, you're going to mix business and pleasure. Some people deal well with that, but others don't. Some individuals have an aversion to mixing business and pleasure; in fact, many people hesitate to get too involved with social networking on a wider scale because they are afraid of having to "live in a glass house." This is perfectly natural; most everyone likes to have an element of privacy to his or her life.

On the one hand, you may choose to have a completely open policy and only share content—both business and personal—that you're totally okay with being found in a Google search, possibly featured on the front page of a mainstream newspaper and/or archived for years. One distinction we've found helpful over the years is to think of your experiences as falling into one of three categories: Professional, Personal, and Private. Since the prevalence and popularity of social media, the line has become rather blurred between our professional and personal lives. Typically, people are interested to know a bit more about you behind your "work self." Sharing about hobbies, travel, family, and interests is actually interesting to most people. However, here's where you get to maintain control: you still may have a private life and simply never share anything online that you don't want out in the open.

Although we tend to favor Twitter over the Facebook personal profile for business development outreach through social media, some people are more willing to become a Facebook friend than others. Just proceed cautiously. Before friending someone, get a sense of whether they'd appreciate it. We wouldn't necessarily be pushy about this—some people draw lines in various parts of their lives, and your intrusion may be seen as inappropriate. If you have a business contact who requests to be your Facebook friend, you're probably in good shape with that particular contact. Before accepting the request, be sure to review your profile critically to ensure you don't have anything there that may be embarrassing to you. You can be sure that a business contact who wants to know about you will check every picture you've posted, pictures where your friends

have tagged you, comments on your News Feed, who your friends are, and conversations you've had in the past.

If you've used Facebook's security settings to keep different parts of your life separate, now would be a great time to double-check the settings and public visibility of your profile. If your profile is open to the public, assume the worst—that your business contacts will do due diligence on you before deciding to trust you or do business with you. You may need to make some changes there, so you don't hurt yourself as you try to build your business and earn a customer's trust through a Facebook friendship. Here are a few other steps you can take to ensure your profile is appropriate for business contacts:

Sanitize your profile Go through the effort of reviewing status updates and pictures to ensure you don't share anything that may be embarrassing or potentially offensive to your new professional friends.

Avoid ongoing political, religious, or other controversial commentary These are things that you should truly avoid to keep from offending people, assuming you aren't affiliated with political or religious organizations. You may even choose to not fill out your own Political and/or Religious Views on your Info tab. Some individuals may have strong opposing beliefs and actually choose not to do business with you because of this. On the other hand, it's possible those who resonate with your beliefs would want to do business with you all the more.

Remove controversial groups or Facebook pages from your profile Groups and pages imply a level of support that goes well beyond an occasional comment. Remove anything that will damage your credibility with business development contacts.

Stay vigilant Sometimes your friends can post some things that are off-color or potentially embarrassing. Once you see things like this, be sure to remove them or disassociate them from your profile.

People share an amazing amount of information on popular social networks. Create a social graph of all your primary targets. Learn everything you can about them from Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn, blogs, and so on. You know that empathy and knowing your customer's needs can help make the difference between a sale and a lost opportunity. Use the social networks to make you smarter.



Week 4: Use Basic Facebook Features to Promote Yourself

Odds are that you are already a Facebook user and you already know the basics of sharing information with friends through your profile. But how should you think of your options in the context of promoting a business? This week, we'll walk you through the different options you have on Facebook and how you can best utilize them.

These features are available to you if you've set up a profile or a fan page for your business, which we will discuss in more detail in Chapter 5, "Month 2: Establish an Effective Corporate Presence with Pages and Groups."

Monday: Post Status Updates

Status updates are in many ways the backbone of the "real-time data" revolution. These are generally short-form messages of a few hundred characters at the most that share one of life's mundane details, an observation, a random fact, or a link to something else on the Internet. Although Facebook and MySpace have both had status updates for a long time, Twitter has popularized them and to some extent taken status updates "mainstream." That said, Facebook status updates can be considerably more impactful in certain situations.

First, let's look at how status updates are presented to other users on Facebook. Status updates, along with other types of notifications on Facebook, appear on the News Feed. As we discussed earlier in this book, the News Feed is the feature that all Facebook users see upon logging in. Because so many status updates are entered by a user's friends, they can quickly appear and disappear in favor of more recent updates from different friends. Figure 4.4 shows the Facebook status updates from some of our friends. Users have some options for seeing status updates as well. They can filter out everything else to see just the updates their friends have shared by clicking the Status Updates link in the upper-left corner of the News Feed screen, as shown in Figure 4.5. Users can also opt to hide status updates from particular friends, which you can also see in Figure 4.5.

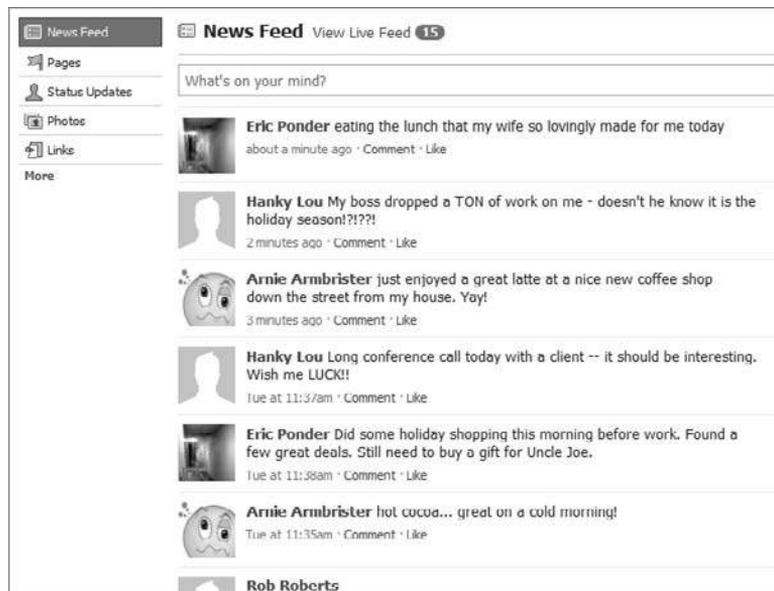


Figure 4.4 Facebook status updates

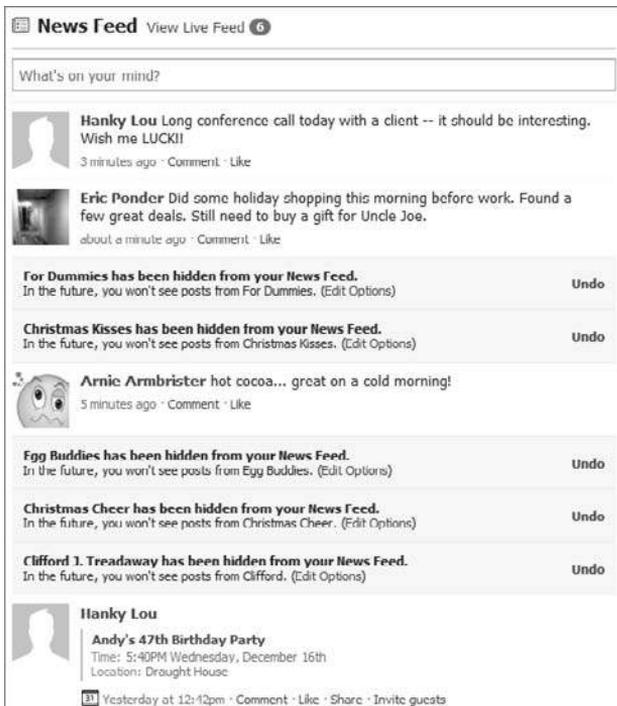


Figure 4.5 Filtering status updates

To post a status update, you do so in what's called the "Publisher" and you have up to 420 characters, though usually less is more when posting content. There is a Publisher at the very top of your home page where it says "What's on your mind?"—this posts to your personal profile. In addition, there is a Publisher on the Wall tab of your personal profile. (Similarly, your fan page has a Publisher at the top of the Wall tab).

What are the implications for marketers and business developers? For one, anything you post as a status update can be seen by anyone who chooses to be your Facebook friend. In fact, if you have your "Posts by Me" Privacy setting set to "Everyone" then literally anyone who comes to your profile can see your wall and all the content there. So, be careful, be relevant, and be entertaining if that is your goal. Stay out of political or religious rants and observations, strong language, or polarizing statements if you are using Facebook primarily for business purposes. You are likely to offend someone with whom you could do business. It's an unnecessary risk. Also remember that you can be "hidden" from view on a friend's News Feed. Some percentage of people who you have as a friend will not hear from you once they make the decision to hide you. So, your message will not quite go out to as many people as you think. That's yet another reason to proceed with confidence but also with caution.

Tuesday/Wednesday: Share Links, Events, Photos, and Videos

You may have noticed at the top of Figure 4.4 that there are icons beneath the Publisher box where you enter your status update. These icons allow users to add links, events, photos, videos, and other content to a status update. This feature adds an entirely new dimension to the types of things you can share—not only can you comment on something, but you can embellish that comment with content to make the experience around the status update more engaging.

Take, for example, links in a common scenario we see for clients—a company wants to post a link to a web page from a Facebook profile or fan page. The idea is that they want to share specific web content—news stories, press releases, YouTube videos, blog posts, and so on—with Facebook users. In this case, the status update is truly secondary, although it makes sense to add a comment or something to appropriately frame the shared content and plant a seed in a user’s mind about how they should view/feel about the content. As you post your link, Facebook pulls in a series of thumbnails from the web page that can be shared alongside the link. You’ll have the option to cycle through a selection of thumbnails and choose the one that best represents what you’re posting: “A picture says a thousand words.” This is particularly handy if you are sharing content from your own property and if Facebook picks up your brand’s image. It’s a free impression that is there for all your friends to see.

You can similarly share events with friends using this process. Events are great calls to action and are used to keep people informed about things that are happening. Figure 4.6 is an example of an event.

Think of Facebook events as a supercharged version of Evite. They have all the same features—event details, maps, contact information, photos, and guest management tools—but they allow invitations through the Facebook social graph. These events can be shared among friends, and they can be promoted through the Facebook News Feed. We’ve seen bands and comedians do a great job at this by publishing their tour stops on Facebook as events. Marketers are increasingly doing the same for trade shows, product launches, and so on.

Photos and videos can also be shared through the Publisher, as well as through specialized apps that Facebook runs for every user. You have two options with photos and videos. You can store them on Facebook, or you can link to libraries or individual photos/videos on third-party sites such as YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr, and others by sharing links to that content. When posting a YouTube link, for example, Facebook actually pulls in the embedded video with the player and users can play the video right in their News Feed or on your Wall without leaving Facebook.

The screenshot shows a Facebook event page for "Austin Tech Happy Hour Sept 2009". The page is titled "Austin Tech Happy Hour Sept 2009" with a subtitle "Demo Day Tie-In". The event details include: Host: Austin Tech Happy Hour; Type: Meetings - Club/Group Meeting; Network: Global; Price: \$10 at the door; Date: Wednesday, September 9, 2009; Time: 6:00pm - 8:00pm; Location: Molotov; Street: 719 West Sixth Street; City/Town: Austin, TX; Phone: 512670TECH; Email: events@austintechhh.com. The description section contains several paragraphs of text, including a registration link, ticket information, and details about the event's location and sponsors. The "Your RSVP" section shows three options: "Attending", "Maybe Attending" (which is selected), and "Not Attending". The "Other Information" section states that guests are allowed to bring friends to the event. The "Other Invites" section is currently empty. The page also features a "Share" button and an "Export" button.

Figure 4.6 Event summary

Thursday: Install Third-Party Apps

Of the tens of thousands of third-party Facebook apps, you may find only a small number of them serve any great use from a marketing standpoint by adding to your personal profile. Many popular apps tend to be light hearted and/or game type apps. Sure, you may meet like-minded individuals or potential customers while playing FarmVille, Bejeweled, or Mafia Wars...but it depends on how you want to invest your social networking time.

We've found the following apps to add value to a personal profile and help you to be perceived with a more rounded presence on Facebook:

- **Profile HTML or Extended Info:** both these apps allow you to add your own custom HTML. A good use of these apps is to add your own “Follow me (us) on Twitter” badge. Also, adding your own opt-in box to encourage visitors to your profile to subscribe to a free download, for example. (http://apps.facebook.com/profile_html & <http://apps.facebook.com/extendedinfo>)
- **YouTube Badge:** great way to display a selection of videos from your own YouTube channel or your favorites. (<http://apps.facebook.com/youtubebadge>)
- **Networked Blogs:** import your blog post for extra exposure on Facebook. You could import your blog feed via Facebook's Notes app instead, but Networked Blogs offers a few more extra features. (<http://apps.facebook.com/blognetworks/index.php>)
- **My Flickr:** if you have images on Flickr, import them via this app for added exposure. (<http://apps.facebook.com/myflickr>)
- **SlideShare:** if you have slides on this site, import them via the app for added valuable content. (<http://apps.facebook.com/slideshare>)

Friday: Understand Other Aspects of the Facebook Platform

The last day of this week is a good time to become familiar with the other ways Facebook allows users to interact with friends both inside the social network and on the Internet. Here is a quick summary of a few of them—they are listed in order of most commonly used by marketers to least commonly used to date:

Badges Facebook allows users to create small widgets that can be put anywhere on the Internet and summarize basic Facebook profile data—usually a picture, first name, last name, and other basic data of the user's choosing. Badges can be created for both profiles and fan pages and can inform users of a website or an organization's Facebook presence (<http://www.facebook.com/facebook-widgets/profilebadges.php>). Chapter 5 includes more detail on badges and creatively using the Facebook fan page.

Applications/games Facebook applications are third-party apps that use the Facebook social graph and provide some functionality to users over and above the basic Facebook platform. In certain cases, these applications can propagate messages to the Facebook News Feed, but only after the user agrees. You should run a few Facebook applications to get an idea of how companies use the functionality and get game content to be present on users' News Feeds. We've listed a few recommended apps in the preceding section and will talk more in-depth about applications and branded games in Chapter 8.

Notes This is Facebook's attempt at a simple social blogging platform. Users can type whatever they'd like in a note, tag certain friends because they are part of the story or because they want attention, and share it on Facebook where it can be found on a News Feed and commented upon. If you've used WordPress or TypePad, it won't take you long to realize that Facebook notes are far less sophisticated. But Facebook notes are really more about the Facebook platform and helping people share thoughts from inside Facebook. You can import any RSS feed via the Notes app—most commonly, your blog feed.

Gifts For a long time, Facebook allowed users to buy free or \$1 virtual gifts that could be shared with fellow users and appear on their profiles. These gifts are very popular, especially because they commemorate major events such as birthdays, anniversaries, and so on. In August 2009, Facebook announced that the gifts functionality will be opened to third-party developers. This is an opportunity that certainly bears monitoring, because it may open new opportunities for marketers to create viral gifts that may provide a branding benefit.

Marketplace Facebook allows individual users to sell items, services, and so on, to other Facebook users through the Marketplace. It is similar to Craigslist, a modern version of old-fashioned classified ads, or other services that allow people to sell or barter with each other. Marketers may have trouble coming up with scenarios that fit the Marketplace, so we won't spend a lot of time discussing this particular Facebook feature. Marketplace was originally a default feature of Facebook; then in March 2009 Facebook teamed up with Oodle—a classified ads service—and re-launched Marketplace with a much more commercial spin. (<http://apps.facebook.com/marketplace>)

