# FACEBOOK
# GROUPS

A Beginner's Guide To Running A Facebook Group

# Introduction

The internet has changed everything. Like all monumental changes, the massive social upheaval caused by the web is barely discernible today. However, what we take for granted today was both unimaginable and unheard of just a short time ago.

If we were to go back 20 years, to 1997, what would we see in terms of information technology, dissemination, and architecture? To begin with, we'd see a much sparser landscape in terms of choice and variety. Today, there are well over a billion websites. Back in 1997, there were probably less than one million.

In 1997, there was no Google. The majority of people used Netscape Navigator to scan and choose between those one million websites. They also spent the majority of their time online parsing through the hundreds of false positive results that Netscape Navigator and its ilk returned with every search query.

Regarding connectivity, the average internet connection was via dial-up, with speeds ranging from 28.8 Kbps up to the then state of the art 56 Kbps. There was no high-speed connectivity. There were no mobile devices. If you wanted to connect to the internet, you sat at a desk and used a desktop computer.

All of this was state of the art technology 20 years ago. However, today this same technology would feel antiquated and inefficient. The difference is perspective. There's an old saying that age brings wisdom. That's not entirely accurate. What time does bring however is perspective. In other words, the more time that passes, the more you can "see" the effects, in this case, of technology on society as a whole.

Today, when we compare 1997 to 2017, we can clearly see how rapidly and profoundly society has changed as a result of increased connectivity. However, these changes have also been assimilated with equal speed. It's interesting to note that no matter how well-connected we become, no matter how quickly and easily we can retrieve, store and share information, we soon accept the more advanced technology as the norm. In some sense, ever advancing information technology is indeed the new black.

In this book, we're going to examine one facet of information technology - a Facebook group. Specifically, we're going to explore how to create and manage a Facebook group from the perspective of an absolute beginner. To begin with, we're going to look at what a Facebook group is and why Facebook groups are an important way to connect and promote your business, your band, your brand or just about anything.

Next, we'll take a look at the specific steps that you need to take to start a Facebook group. You'll learn how to decide who the group is for so that you can tighten the focus for your reach for even greater connectivity. You'll learn how to utilize the Facebook dashboard to do the actual group creation. You'll also learn how to customize your group by adding specific details, creating a look that's yours and yours alone.

Once your group has been created, we'll turn our attention to promotion. You'll learn how to utilize a Facebook fan page and Facebook advertising to draw an audience to your group. We'll show you how to cross-promote your group in other Facebook groups with similar interests. You'll also learn how to attract people with influence to your group, promote your group on other social media platforms and the secret of using gated content to attract members.

Finally, we'll focus on the care and feeding of an established Facebook group. You'll learn how a Facebook group is an organic entity. You'll learn why engagement is essential to the continued health of your group. You'll also learn why spam, in any form, will stifle engagement, and how to

ensure that your group remains spam-free. More importantly, we'll show you how to raise engagement by using a steady stream of entertaining and educating content. You'll learn how to find relevant topics for content, as well as how to mine the active interests of your group's members to produce content that matches those interests.

In the end, nothing is going to stop the forward march of information technology. Things will continue to get faster, larger and, ironically, smaller and easier to use. The key to success, no matter how you define that term, is in learning to use information technology to your advantage. By mastering the art of a Facebook group, you will be poised to use the biggest social media platform to your advantage. That, my friends, is the perfect example of the benefits of technological assimilation.

# What Are Facebook Groups and Why Are They Important?

September 26, 2006, is a somewhat important date in the annals of internet history. On that day, Facebook became available to anyone over the age of 13 with a valid email address.

Originally designed as a centralized website where the students of Harvard University could connect for academic and social reasons, Facebook soon spread like wildfire. The idea the connectivity inherent in internet technology could be used to connect disparate people in real time was not new. Various other platforms were available that did this is one form or another, e.g. chatrooms and instant messaging provided by AOL, Compuserve and others. However, no one had yet integrated a way to combine chat and integrated visuals into one smooth package. This is what made Facebook a game changer.

Within hours of being started, Facebook had 1500 users on the Harvard campus. In less than one month, half of the graduate and undergraduate population of Harvard were Facebook users. Three months later, Facebook had expanded to include the populations of Yale, Stanford and Columbia Universities. The remaining Ivy League schools were next, followed by nearly every university in the United States and Canada. Universities in the UK and Europe were next, followed by the rest of the world.

This phenomenal growth did not go unnoticed by the media. By the time September 26, 2006, rolled around, the non-academic members of the general public were lined up, eager and ready to give Facebook a spin. So when Facebook did open it's doors to the public at large, what was, until then, a phenomenal growth rate quickly became unprecedented.

In eleven months, Facebook experienced an extraordinary monthly growth rate of over 178%. By August of 2008, Facebook had 100 million worldwide users. In the coming years, that growth rate continued

unchecked. By July of 2010, Facebook exceeded 500 million users. In September of 2012, there were 1 billion people worldwide who used Facebook regularly.

Today, Facebook's numbers continue to be impressive. The site has, on average, 1.86 billion monthly users and 1.23 billion users who are active on a daily basis. No matter how you cut it, that's a whole lot of traffic. The number one billion gets tossed around a lot, so much so that it becomes meaningless. So, here's a quick stat that will help you to pull Facebook's enormous reach into focus - if Facebook's average daily users were a country, that country would be the most populous nation on Earth. That's a lot of people, which translates to a lot of eyeballs that could be looking at what you're interested in promoting.

That last sentence puts what makes Facebook so valuable when it comes to marketing and promotion. Nearly a sixth of the world's total population gathers in one place each and every day. If you have a Facebook presence, then a portion of that enormous population will invariably see your presence and take note of what it is that you're promoting. In short, a Facebook presence means awareness, engagement and, ultimately, conversion.

So, how do you get an active Facebook presence? One of the best ways is by starting, promoting and maintaining a Facebook group. A Facebook group is primarily a place where people who share a specific interest, hobby, problem or concern can gather and exchange information, tips and connect. Members of the group can ask and answer questions, post photos, and videos and follow conversations that interest them. A Facebook group is sort of like a private club. Interest drives membership and interest keeps the individual members engaged.

As a Facebook group owner, you are the proprietor of the club. You, more or less, run the place. You can decide who gets into the club. You can lead the discussion within the club, and you can remove any members who you find problematic. More importantly, a Facebook group allows you, the group owner, to connect directly with the membership of the group. Every time you post content, a message regarding the content, as

as well as link to the content, is sent directly to every member's email inbox. Having the ability to connect at will to a relatively captive audience is the key to understanding the importance of a Facebook group.

Facebook groups matter because they tap into the tremendous amount of traffic that Facebook generates on a daily basis. Month after month, Facebook's traffic beats the next three most popular social media platforms combined. Facebook usage accounts for one in every six minutes spent online. This constant flow, while slightly intimidating, represents tremendous potential. All demographics are represented in a cross section of Facebook users. For example, people of every age use Facebook on a regular basis. 82% of 18 - 29-year-olds, 79% of 30 - 49-year-olds and 56% of 50-year-olds and up are regular Facebook users. Even more importantly, Facebook use is intergenerational. 83% of parents with a child between the ages of 13 and 18 are friends with their child on Facebook.

Other demographic statistics show an equal amount of penetration by Facebook. The gender split between Facebook users is relatively even. 44% of all users identify as women, and 56% identify as men. Marital status is also even, with 39% of users reporting themselves and married and 39% reporting themselves as single. It's when we come to education that Facebook's demographic begins to show some disparity.   62% of Facebook users report some level of college education. On the other hand, a much smaller 30% report state high school as their highest level of education. The remaining 8% report some level of postgraduate education.

As a Facebook group owner and administrator, your primary responsibility is to identify and understand your audience. The fact that Facebook's traffic reaches broadly across so many demographic boundaries increases the chances that you will be able to meet that responsibility. In a bit, we're going to be getting into the specifics of how to start and promote a group. At the risk of getting a little ahead of ourselves, Facebook provides group owners with free analytics that help owners understand

what attracts and engages an audience. By digging into these statistics, an owner can narrowly focus their efforts on exactly the type of content that is guaranteed to resonate with their target audience. The analytic tools will also help them to define who their primary audience members are. This is invaluable when you are attempting to dominate a very narrow and defined niche market.

In the end, Facebook is still the top dog when it comes to social media platforms. It is true that there are now far more competitors on the scene than there were when Facebook first started out. It is also true that a few of these platforms are beginning to see relatively large average monthly traffic figures. However, despite the increased competition, Facebook remains a proverbial institution. The advantage that it continues to maintain over the competition comes mostly from the fact that a vast number of people use Facebook instinctively and reflexively. It is the social media platform that is a habit, like a morning cup of coffee or tea. This type of institutional behavior allows Facebook to continue to generate increasing rates of traffic while weathering challenges from other platforms whose audience is not habitual and reflexive.

All of this means that Facebook will remain somewhat immune to the vagaries of internet fad and fashion, at least for the foreseeable future. The media will always tout the latest social media flavor of the month as the next big thing. However, up until this point, no one social media platform seems to be able to give a user experience that attracts a wide demographic diversity. What appeals to hipsters and tech heads invariably does not attract a broader swath of the population. So while the reports of Facebook's imminent demise will still be used in the 24-hour news cycle as a particularly juicy piece of click bait, it will not change Facebook's continued dominance of the social media field.

# Starting a Facebook Group

We've taken a look at the purpose of a Facebook group. We've also examined why Facebook groups are an important component of any marketing or branding strategy. Now, it's time to turn our attention to the steps involved in starting a Facebook group. In this section, we're going to examine those steps. You'll learn how to decide who the audience is for your Facebook group. You'll also learn about the steps that you need to take to create a Facebook group. Finally, you'll learn how to customize and optimize the look of your group for maximum appealability.

## Deciding on an Audience

As we discussed above, a Facebook group is an excellent way to establish a Facebook presence for your business, brand or interest. However, unless you first decide what audience you want to influence, help or talk to, having any Facebook presence is beside the point.

There are two reasons why deciding on an audience beforehand is so important. To begin with, knowing exactly who it is that you want to talk to will help you to focus the language and descriptives that you'll use to label, depict and brand your group. Once you're able to describe your group accurately, you're able to tell others what your group is all about. When you do that, you will begin to attract the people who are very interested in the groups focus, in other words, the members of your target audience.

For example, let's say that you're interested in French bread baking techniques and recipes. Would you be more likely to join a group called "Bread Baking" or a group called "Bread Baking the French Way"? Obviously, you'd be much more inclined to join the later rather than the former.  Why? Because the second group sounds as if it is specifically designed to meet your particular interest. Sure, you may find French bread baking tips and techniques in the first group. However, the odds that you'll encounter them in the second group are significantly increased. Also, you're much more likely to find people to connect with in

the second group. Because they are likely to share your interest, it will be easier to get to know them and to feel included in a community of like-minded individuals.

The second reason why deciding on a particular audience beforehand is important is that by doing so you make it much easier for your audience to find you. We've already discussed the enormous amounts of daily and monthly traffic that Facebook experiences. The only way for your audience to find your group in this massive crowd is through the tags you use to describe your group. When you decide on your audience ahead of starting a group, you can then use the right tags and keywords that will allow your group to stand out from all the rest.

## Creating the Group

Once you've decided on an audience, it's time to create a Facebook group for that audience. Facebook has made the process of setting up a group somewhat painless. All you need to do is click on the downward arrow that you'll find in the upper right-hand corner of the Facebook screen, next to the question mark.

Once you click on the arrow, a pop-up menu will appear containing several choices, including "Create Group." Click on this, and a pop-up box will appear, also with several options.

The first thing you'll need to to is name your group. Using our previous example as a guide, you'll name your group as specifically as possible in order to attract and be seen by your target audience.

You'll also be required to add at least one Facebook friend to the group. Always add a close friend or loved one that you know won't object to being added to the group without being asked.

Finally, select the "closed group" privacy setting. This creates exclusivity. If the group were public, anyone could see the content. Keeping the group closed means that you have to join the group to see what's going on. Keeping the group closed also means that you can control who joins and you can remove anyone from the group as you see fit. Having this

power will help you to monitor a number of spam postings that the membership is exposed to. If someone is spamming, you can kick them out of the group and get on with business.

You may also want to check the box in the lower left-hand corner labeled "Pin to Shortcuts." When you do, your new group will always be listed under "Shortcuts" over in the left sidebar on the main Facebook page. Once you've done all this, click on the "Create" button.

Once you hit create, you'll be asked to choose an icon for your group. Select one that comes closest to what your group is all about. Alternatively, if none of the available icons accurately represent your group, you can opt to skip this step. Once you select an icon or select Skip, you're done creating your group. You will next be taken to your brand new group's page.

## Adding Details and Customizing Your Group

Once you're in your new group, the first thing you'll want to do is choose and upload a group cover photo. You'll find the buttons to do so in the group header at the top of the page. You want to make sure that the picture you do use closely ties in and visually coordinates with the group's purpose and focus.

Next, click on the button with the three dots in the lower right-hand corner of the header area at the top of the page and select "Edit Group Settings." The first setting to edit is Group Type. Choosing a group type that reflects what your group is all about will help your audience to find their way to the group.

Next, select a membership approval method. You can either let any member add and approve new members, or you can reserve that power to yourself. Keep in mind that you want members of your audience to be easily able to join your group. By reserving the approval process to yourself, you may be increasing the difficulty of interested people in joining.

Next, you want to add a description of your group. You want to make the description engaging and attractive to your audience members. Ideally, your should make potential members want to join the group after they read your description.

Next, enter some tags for your group. These tags will help people interested in the focus of your group to find it when they search Facebook. Each group can have up to five tags. So, going back to our example, a group focusing on French bread baking techniques might use the tags "bread" "bread baking" "French bread baking techniques" "baking French bread" and "French bread."

Finally, you want to leave the box next to post-approval unchecked. This means that any members post will automatically appear in the group's feed. Engagement is the number one way to grow a group, so you don't want to delay or restrict any member who is already engaged from creating more interest through relevant posts. Remember, you have the ability to control spam and unwanted posts by making group rules, warning members who violate rules and, ultimately, banning members who consistently behave inappropriately.

Now hit the button marked "Save." Congratulations! You've now successfully started your very own Facebook group. In the next section, we're going to talk about some of the best practices that will help you promote your group so that membership will grow.

## Promoting Your Facebook Group

In the last section, you learned how to start a Facebook group. In this section, we're going to look at some of the ways that you can promote a group once it's been started.  We'll look at how to use a Facebook fan page and Facebook ads to give your new group more visibility.  We'll also look at how cross-promotion, member promotion and attracting influencers can help to explode your group's membership. Finally, we'll examine how promoting your group on other social media platforms and

using gated content can raise curiosity and entice fence sitters to hit the "Join" button.

## Facebook Fan Pages and Facebook Ads

In the beginning, it can be somewhat difficult to promote your group. You don't have very many members, so some of the promotion methods that we're going to be discussing shortly won't be as effective. The thing is, you have to be creative in your initial promotions. After all, Facebook gets an enormous amount of traffic each and every day. All you have to do in the beginning is grab the attention of only a minuscule amount of the traffic, and your group will be off and running in no time.

One of the best ways to do this is by setting up a fan page for your group. The idea is to have a public page that essentially focuses on the same subject as your group. You get people to organically like your page. Once you have enough of a following on the page, you then begin to make your followers aware of your group and its benefits. In other words, a fan page is a way to take the first steps towards your target audience.

Starting a fan page is similar to starting a group. In fact, many of the steps are almost the same. You begin the same way, by clicking the arrow on the top right of the main Facebook page. This time instead of selecting "Create Group," you're going to choose "Create Page." Once you do, you'll be prompted to pick a page type that most closely resembles the subject of your group.

Depending on what page type your select, you'll next be prompted to name your page. You want to give your fan page the same name or name that is similar to your group. So, going back to our example, the fan page for our Baking Bread the French Way group would also be Breaking Bread the French Way.

Once you've named your group, you will be taken to your new page. You'll need to upload a cover photo. Use the same one as you used in your group. You'll also need to upload a profile picture. The profile picture should be closely related to the cover photo. So, if our French bread site

used a picture of home-baked loaves of bread for the cover photo, it would want to continue the bread baking theme in the profile picture.

You're also going to have to add a page description. Again, use the same one that you used for your group description. Now, you've completed your fan page setup.

Remember, your goal with the page is to get as many likes as possible. You can start by inviting your current Facebook friends to like your page by using the "Invite" button next to your friends over on the right-hand side of your page.

You can also use Facebook ads to target people interested in the subject of your group. Now, the specifics of Facebook advertising are beyond the scope of the book. However, we will take a quick look at the process.

Simply do back to the arrow in the upper right hand and select "Create Ads." Next, choose your marketing objective. In this case, it will be "Engagement." Next, give your ad campaign a name. This will distinguish it from any other campaigns you might run in the future. Then select the type of engagement you're after, in this case, "Page Likes," and hit "Create Ad Account."

Next, you'll select your country, your currency and your time zone. You'll then choose your fan page to promote and the audience you want to promote to. Obviously, this audience will vary from page to page and group to group, depending on your individual circumstances.

For our purposes here, we'll focus on the detailed targeting for your ad campaign. This is where you can use Facebook's vast demographic base to zero in with laser focus on your target audience. Using our example, we would enter baking bread, After we do, Facebook will then provide additional suggestions that we can use to narrow the focus to a specific group of Facebook users that we want to engage with our page. Select the ideas that make the most sense to your page and its subject. As you do, Facebook will add them to a growing list. On the right, you will the expected number of people your ad will reach, along with the estimated results of that reach, again is measured in individuals who've seen the ad.

Finally, you will set a budget for your ad campaign. Again, this budget is up to you and your personal circumstances. However, it is wise not to spend excessive amounts of money on an ad that isn't giving you the page engagement that you desire. Experiment with various ads and find one that works before throwing larger amounts of money at an ad campaign.

Eventually, you will want to begin promoting your group to the followers of your fan page, but this is not something that you want to do initially. Between the time you start your fan page, and the time you begin promoting your group to the page, you first have to provide the page followers with a high level of value. Your content on the page has to engage and entertain them. Essentially, you are building trust up among your followers. When that level of trust is high enough, a large percentage of those fans will be more than willing to become members of your Facebook group.

Always remember that even when you have the trust of your page's audience, you always want to promote your group in a gentle, non-pushy way. Push too hard, and you'll begin to lose all of those "likes" that you worked so hard to gain.

## Cross Promotion

You already realize that there is a lot of Facebook traffic. What might not be as apparent is that all of that traffic results in an enormous amount of Facebook groups. It's been estimated that there are currently over one billion Facebook groups. Now, you could look at all of those groups as competition. In reality, some of those groups represent an incredible opportunity to promote your group.

The vast amount of Facebook groups means that no matter how small and specialized your market niche might be, there are bound to be at least several other groups that will be related to yours. Every group wants to increase their reach and gain new members. What better way to do that than with cross promotion?

Cross promotion is essentially a "scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours"

proposition. You find a group that is topically related to your group with a decent amount of members, let's say 100 or more. That group's membership must also be active and engaged. First, join the group and become active and engaged yourself. Provide good value for the group through your posts.

Once you've been active within the group for a while, approach the owner of the group and offer to promote their group in your group if they will return the favor. Of course, it goes without saying that for your offer to be attractive to the other group's owner, your group should also have at least 100 members who are also active and engaged. There is no benefit for the owner of a healthy and active group to promote a group that is the opposite. Similarly, there is no benefit to you to cross-promote with a group that has either too few members or a low level of activity and engagement.

Remember, cross-promotion is a numbers game. There will be group owners who will jealously guard their members and will see your efforts to cross-promote as a form of poaching. However, there will be owners who will see the benefit. Finding those owners is worth the effort. With sustained cross-promotion, you will see an uptick in your membership and increase in your group's reach and influence.

## Promotion by Your Members

An often overlooked source of promotional energy is the existing members of your group. After all, these are the people who are already fans of what you're doing. If you're doing your job, they should be engaged in the dynamic of the group, participating and adding to the value of what's already there. That's why it's important for you, promotion-wise, to tap into your member's excitement and get to spread that excitement throughout each of their social and professional circles. Let's take a look at what that means, number-wise.

It's estimated that, on average, every person on Facebook has about 250 friends. As you know, social media friends often share interests. So, every one of your current members has the potential to make several hundred

referrals to your group. That's why it's important to motivate them to do so. Try holding a contest based on who makes the most referrals in a single month. Alternatively, you can celebrate group milestones, like the first 100, 300 and 500 members. Give away prizes or freebies to members who participate. Remember, every promotional effort you make grows you group and increases your social media influence.

## Get Influencers to Join Your Group

A great promotional technique is to get influential people in your particular niche to recognize and join your group. The idea is that when other people see that an influencer is a member of your group, they will be more motivated to join themselves because of that influence.

The best way to go about this is by promoting in your group something the influencer has written. Make sure that you tag them when you do the promotion. The influencer will be notified of your tag and your promotion. Chances are they will visit your group to check it out. After that, they may be motivated to join. Remember, you can identify influencers in your niche by taking a look at their followings on various social media platforms.

## Use Other Social Media Platforms to Promote Your Group

You can jump start the growth of your Facebook group simply promoting across other social media platforms. The reason for this is visit frequency.

Almost 90% of Facebook users will log in to check their accounts at least one time per month. So, if they are only on Facebook, let's say, once every two weeks on average, where are they the rest of the time? They're on other social media platforms, that's where they are. So, in order to promote your Facebook group to these occasional users, you need to go where they are and spread the word. Mention your group in all of your other social media profiles. Tweet about it occasionally. Mention your group wherever appropriate.

One technique to get people on other social media platforms interested in your group is by using what's known as gated content. Essentially, you create some form of valuable content related to your niche. You then upload that content to your group. By doing so, you place the content out of the reach of anyone but group members. You then promote the gated content on Facebook and other social media platforms. The gated content motivates people to join the group in order to gain access to the content.

# The Continued Care and Feeding of Your Facebook Group

We've looked at how to start a group, as well as how to promote a new group to gain members. Now, we're going to turn our attention to maintaining an already established group - one that has a sizable membership that is both active and engaged. We're first going to look at spam - what it is and how to control it. Then, we'll look at different ways to continue to promote engagement so that the group continues to remain a vibrant and vital place to be.

## Spam - How to Kill It Before It Kills You

Spam will suck the life out of your group quickly. Members who see spam react by losing enthusiasm and lowering engagement. Let enough spam into your group and, over time, it won't be a group - it'll be a graveyard. That's because absolutely no one wants to receive messages and sales pitches that are unwanted. They don't want it in their inboxes, and they don't want it in their groups. If your group gets a reputation as spammy, you might as well give it up right then and there. That is one negative reputation that you will be unable to rehabilitate.

Obviously, you've set up your group to be closed. This means that most spam purveyors will be unable to get access to your group. However, there will still be several people who will manage to slip through. This means that you are always going to have to be vigilant about what's going on in your group.

The moment that you see a member post something that in any way seems like spam, you have to take action. Send the person an instant message and tell them that what they're doing is a direct violation of the group's rules. Tell them to remove the post and watch what they post in the future.

For most people, this warning will be enough. However, if anyone continues to post spam after being warned, boot them from the group as

quickly as possible. Let the other group members know what you've done. Your target audience will show its appreciation with increased loyalty and support.

You might want to consider listing all of the group's rules in a post and then pinning that post, so it's the first thing that they see when they join. Alternatively, consider linking the rules right in the group description. That way people are aware of them even before they join. Both actions will go a long way to reducing spam in your group. Potential spammers will see that you mean business and group members will feel more comfortable knowing that you have a zero tolerance towards spam.

# Conclusion

We've now come to the end of our Facebook group journey. You've learned what a Facebook group is and why Facebook groups are important. You've learned the specifics of how to start a group, as well as how to promote your group once it's up and running. You've also learned how to continue to care for your group by eliminating spam before it eliminates you. In short, you have everything that you need to start, promote and maintain your very own Facebook group so that you can increase the reach and presence of your personal brand. To help you along your way, we're going to leave you with the top ten tips that will help you to optimize your Facebook group.

1. Decide what your group is about and then let other interested people know.

2. Give examples of the type of content that members can post.

3. Always give new members a personal welcome.

4. Encourage members to invite their friends to join.

5. Personally react to and comment on member's posts.

6. Share and promote your own compelling content.

7. Ask questions and poll your members on a regular basis.

8. Check in on your group at least once a day.

9. Have group rules, make sure that the membership knows the rules and enforce them stringently.

10. Remember, building a group takes time, but it will happen.

# FACEBOOK GROUPS

## What Are Facebook Groups and Why Are They Important?

- ✓ A Facebook group is primarily a place where people who share a specific interest, hobby, problem or concern can gather and exchange information, tips and connect

- ✓ Facebook groups matter because they tap into the tremendous amount of traffic that Facebook generates on a daily basis

- ✓ Facebook usage accounts for one in every six minutes spent online

- ✓ As a Facebook group owner and administrator, your primary responsibility is to identify and understand your audience

- ✓ Facebook's traffic reaches broadly across so many demographic boundaries increases the chances that you will be able to meet that responsibility

## Starting a Facebook Group

- ✓ The following are the steps you need to take to start a Facebook group

    - o   Deciding on an Audience

    - o   Creating the Group

    - o   Adding Details and Customizing Your Group

# Promoting Your Facebook Group

✓ Some of the ways that you can promote a group once it's been started are:

- o   Facebook Fan Pages and Facebook Ads

- o   Cross Promotion

- o   Promotion by Your Members

- o   Get Influencers to Join Your Group

- o   Use Other Social Media Platforms to Promote Your Group

# Conclusion

✓ Here are the top ten tips that will help you to optimize your Facebook group

- o   Decide what your group is about and then let other interested people know.

- o   Give examples of the type of content that members can post.

- o   Always give new members a personal welcome.

- o   Encourage members to invite their friends to join.

- o   Personally react to and comment on member's posts.

- o   Share and promote your own compelling content.

- o   Ask questions and poll your members on a regular basis.

- o   Check in on your group at least once a day.

- o   Have group rules, make sure that the membership knows the rules and enforce them stringently.

- o   Remember, building a group takes time, but it will happen.

**4 Ways to Up Your Facebook Group Engagement**

When you have a Facebook group of your own, engagement can be one of the hardest things to consistently experience. And of course, without engagement, why have a Facebook group at all?

Engagement can be tricky. There are certain things people love to talk about and things they don't. We'd all like to think that "if you build it, they'll come," but that's certainly not the case with Facebook groups. They may join, but that won't get them talking.

So, what will get your audience responding to you and each other? There are a few tricks of the trade that work to get people interacting. In this article, we'll discuss four ways to increase the engagement within your Facebook group.

1. **Ask questions.** Now ask more questions. People love to talk about themselves, so ask. This is, by far, the easiest way to at least have people begin responding to your posts. Ask questions related to your niche or group topic, and make sure you respond to each and every response you receive. Just answering a question is boring. Interacting with the owner of the group is not.
2. **Think about your timing.** When is your audience using Facebook? If your audience tends to work a 9-5 job, they may not be online to see your posting at 10 am and 2 pm. If they are online perusing Facebook when they receive a notification of a new post in your group, they'll be more apt to check it out and get involved. Social media auto-posters such as HootSuite and Buffer have analytics to help you determine the best times to post to get the most views, and ultimately the most engagement.
3. **Photographs are king in Facebook groups.** More people look at posts with photos, and people are much more inclined to respond if it is a photo that is on-topic. Alternatively, you can create a pattern interrupt by using a shocking photo that is entirely *not* on-topic for your group.

4. **Use surveys to find out what they want.** This is different than asking questions. Use a survey in your Facebook group to find out exactly what your members want to hear from you. Maybe they want more video content. Maybe they want more industry news. It depends on your niche and topic, but by asking your audience what they want, you can deliver that, and make the group fit what they're looking for. That is bound to make them more interactive.

# Creating Your Facebook Group

So you want to create a Facebook group! Great! Let's get started, and you'll soon have your Facebook group up and running smoothly, and be able to grow and expand your group and your following.

The first thing you'll do is log in to your Facebook account. Click the down arrow on the right side of the menu bar at the top, and choose "Create Group." Enter the necessary information about your group that the page asks for - and remember to use a name that described what your group is about to make it easier for new members to find it when they use the Facebook search function.

At this point, it will help you if you take a moment to add the group to your "favorites." That way, the group name will show up in your left sidebar near the top, and you'll have easy access to it without having to search for it each time you want to visit the group or post.

Set your group privacy to "Closed." This will create a feeling of exclusivity within your group because not just anyone can get in. It will also enable you to monitor who is added to the group, to make sure they're a good fit. Remember that there are over a billion daily users of Facebook, and it's a given that some of them are spammers who will try to gain access to your group.

You also want people to have to join the group to see the content - another reason to choose a closed group rather than a public group.

Now, add at least one friend. This is necessary to start your group, so pick a person who you think will be interested and let them know you're adding them to the group ahead of time. No one likes to be added to groups without their permission, so don't do that.

Now you can begin customizing your group page by adding a description of the group and adding any rules you have that you want everyone to be aware of. Choose a group icon from those shown, and then find an image that is related to your group's topic. For free photos to use, you can look at Pixabay.com, where you'll find thousands of beautiful graphics. You'll use this image as your group cover photo.

Your group is just about complete! The last thing you need to do is go to "Edit Group Settings" and add a few tags that describe the group content and what it's all about. This will make finding your group much easier.

Now that your group has been created, you can work on promoting it and gaining members!

# How Cross-Promotion Can Grow Your Facebook Group

Cross-promotion is a good strategy that can be used to increase the size of your Facebook Group. With over a billion groups on Facebook, it's very likely you'll find some groups on a similar topic to the group you're running. And everyone who has a group is interested in strengthening their numbers, so it's usually a win-win situation for everyone involved.

When you've attracted a couple of hundred members, you can begin cross-promotion efforts. You want your group to be attractive to another group owner, so don't try to do this until you've reached that couple-hundred-members mark.

Do some research on Facebook to find other groups with the same or similar topic, or a similar but complementary topic. Find groups with a lot of members - a few hundred or more, at least. Join the groups first, to check them out, make sure they're active and that the kind of information being shared there is in line with what you have in your group.

If the group looks good, start posting in the group, and answering other's questions within the group. In other words, you don't want it to take up your entire day, but become an active member of the groups you'd like to cross-promote. After a couple of weeks of adding value to the group, contact the administrator of the group and ask them if they would be interested in a cross-promotion of your two groups.

Maybe you could offer the group something, such as an ebook you've written that's on-topic, or offer a webinar for the group. These things help you appear legitimate and authentic when approaching another group's administrator.

You won't get a "yes" from every group administrator that you contact, but there will be a few who agree to a cross-promotion, and the number of members you have in your group will eventually get higher!

Another way to grow your group is to ask your members to share the group URL with anyone they know that has an interest in the topic. If you're doing your job right and offering great content within the group, your members will be very willing to share the group with their friends.

You can hold a 7-day content where each group member tries to get the most people to join the group. Give a prize or prizes to the top three - something related to the group topic.

Get creative! Come up with a few of your own ideas that you can utilize to bring in new members on a consistent basis.

## Make Your Facebook Group Last

One of your biggest tasks to accomplish with your Facebook group is making it fun, exciting, informative, and interactive - and it's only in accomplishing this that you'll find what a lot of Facebook groups don't - longevity!

There are lots of ways to create a Facebook group that people love to hang out in. One of the ways is to create polls. Ask questions of your group members and then create content based on the most popular answers. Polls are helpful in this area as you can have several set answers that people choose, or you can allow them to add a reply to the poll. Often this results in surprising insight into what your audience wants to know and learn!

When you know what your audience wants, you can tailor the content in the group just for them! And of course, they'll see that and get the feeling that you're invested in providing value for them. This will keep them coming back.

Don't forget to ask for shares! If you find that a post is exceptionally popular, and getting lots of interaction, ask your members to share the post on their wall, or privately to people they think would be interested, along with an invite to your group. People love sharing content - in fact, over 26% of Facebook users in the US alone click on the share button after reading a post they enjoy!

Another idea to ensure your group's longevity is to have one day a week where you say hello to and introduce each new member to the group. Ask them to make an introductory post sharing how they found the group, and why they are interested in your topic. This can also be an excellent way to get content ideas tailored specifically to your audience's wants and needs.

Once your group gets super busy, keep a document in the group (yes, you can save documents in groups!) that has a URL link to each popular or busy thread, along with a short explanation of the topic of that thread. This can be a valuable resource to new members looking for specific information.

Finally, a third idea for creating a long-lasting Facebook group is to ask a couple of influencers in your niche if they'd like to join. It's always nice to have a couple "widely known" experts in your group to help answer questions and keep topics flowing. Influencers will add brevity and authority to your group and will help to raise your authority by proxy.

# Stopping SPAM Within Your Facebook Group

As soon as your group gains a few members, you'll need to be on the lookout for spam. Even though your group is a closed group, there will still be those who become members and then decide to sell something meaningless and off-topic to your group. When this happens, it must be dealt with immediately, and with zero tolerance, or you'll very quickly risk losing your audience in the group.

As your membership numbers get higher, you'll likely see more spam and more non-authentic members entering the picture. You'll need to keep a close eye on this, and as soon as you see a post that is spammy, delete it, and remove or block that member immediately. If you see a spammy post from a member who has contributed to the group and offered value, delete the post and message them privately. It's entirely possible that they are unaware of the rules of your group in regards to promotion.

On the subject of group rules, it pays to have some about spam posting, group content, use of expletives, and anything else that you feel needs to be monitored from the get-go. Compile these rules, and add them to your group description, and also create a "sticky" post on the group description and rules that will stay at the top of all posts, all the time. This is an excellent way to make sure that everyone sees what the group is about, and what the rules are so that no excuses can be given when someone starts spamming or misbehaving in the group.

If you do have to ban a member due to spam, it is a good idea to provide an explanation to your group as to what you did and why, so that everyone knows what's going on, and to enforce that spam or bad behavior won't be tolerated. Some groups rarely have a problem with this, and some groups have to be vigilant because they're always being spammed.

If spam becomes a big issue for your group, you can consider a "post diet" where each post has to be personally approved by you or the moderators you choose from within the group. This can be time-consuming, especially if you have a very active group, but it will deter the spammers, as they simply won't be able to target your group any longer. If this is necessary, consider a 3-4 day period where all posts must be approved, and then go back to your normal posting settings, and see if the spammers back off.

## The Power of a Facebook Group

Over the past few years, it's become increasingly harder to get people's attention. On Facebook, in particular, we've found that organic reach for pages has dropped 42% over the first six months of 2016. This is partly due to algorithm changes, and partly due to the response from brands trying to increase their exposure, publishing more, and creating more competition for the eyes that are on the news feed.

Facebook groups are a great solution to this decrease in organic reach. They create engagement and community that pages simply can't. The nature of a Facebook group is far more interactive and multi-dimensional, whereas pages can seem a bit flat and one-sided.

A Facebook group is also a major way to gain traffic to your website. Posts to your page or personal wall will often go unnoticed due to Facebook algorithms, but each member of a group receives a notification if there's a new post. This drives traffic to the group and can drive traffic to your website when you share a link to your blog. Of course, these types of notifications can be turned off, but if you're offering great content and personal interaction with your group, it's likely they won't be.

There are three main things you can do to ensure your Facebook group starts out on the right foot and attracts the potential customers you're looking for.

1. Be crystal clear on what type of group you want to have. There are three types of Facebook groups in terms of privacy - open, closed, and secret. Open groups are just that - anyone can see who is in the group, anyone can see the posts, and anyone can join. With a closed group, anyone can see the group and who is in it, but only members can view the content in the group. With a secret group, no one but a member of the group can see that the group exists, or see who is

in the group and the group posts. In essence, with a secret group, you need an invite to join, or you won't even know it's there.

2.  Once you're sure what type of Facebook group you want, set up specific criteria for deciding on who gets approved into the group. Figure out who your ideal client is - all the demographics and details - and accept members accordingly. This will increase your group's integrity and exclusivity.

3. Create and adhere to a content calendar for your group. Decide on the questions, polls, photos, and events you'll be posting about. Have a list of post ideas that you can refer to if you get stuck for content ideas. Have lots of ideas for group participation, and that'll help increase your engagement within the group.

## Using Facebook Ads to Grow Your Facebook Group

The best and fastest way to get people to like your Facebook Fan Page is to run Facebook ads targeting the people you want to attract. It sounds complicated, but it's quite easy. And once you get people to your Fan Page, you can introduce them to your Facebook Group!

Let's go over the basics of a Facebook ad first. Log in to your Facebook account and go to the Page you want to promote. Scroll down and on the bottom of the left sidebar, click the "Promote" button and choose "Promote Your Page." Now select the basic demographics, and to really carefully target your ideal member, pick some interests, based on the topic of your page. Think about topics that complement the subject of your page (and group). Choose topics that are similar and complementary to your topic to find interested people that will like your page.

Choose your daily budget and the duration the ad will run. Then, click "promote"! That's it!

Now you won't immediately start promoting your Facebook group - that would look too much like SPAM. Post interesting tidbits, links to articles that are on-topic and interesting or entertaining, advice, recipes, whatever it is that is relevant to the page and group topic. After you've gained around 100 fans on your page, you can then begin to mention your group on the page.

The key is to offer a lot of value to your fans first because if they enjoy what you post, they're much more likely to join your private group. If they feel you give them targeted information, are entertaining and appealing, and are actively involved, upon mention of your group, you'll see lots of people start joining. But don't stop attending to your page just because your group is growing! Remember that your fan page contains your future group members, so you'll need to work on both at the same time.

When you do begin mentioning your Facebook group on your fan page, don't over do it. Don't do it all the time. Adding value with an occasional mention of the group is what you want to aim for. If you promote your group too often, too soon, you'll get fewer members to the group because they will think you're just going to SPAM them in the group, and things like that are already too prevalent on Facebook.

Mention your group every couple of days. Tell your fans what they can expect in the group and the exciting things that are going on in the group. But don't be pushy about having your fans join the group - that's the quickest way to lose fans.

Listen to what your audience wants, and give them that content. If your audience has questions, provide answers, even if you don't know the answers yourself. Cite websites with resources that they need. Give them a fun place to interact, and give them solid, entertaining content, and they'll follow you to your Group!

## Who Is Your Facebook Group For?

It's awesome that you want to build a Facebook group, but there's something you need to think about first. One of the first decisions you'll have to make when planning your Facebook group is - who will the group serve? The more you can hone in on the type of people you want in the group, and their interests, problems, and desires, the better group you'll be able to maintain for them.

This applies to any content marketing, but especially so for Facebook groups. You'll be able to describe your group more succinctly to attract interested members, and you'll eventually have a group that is filled with your ideal customer avatar. And the more your members love the group, the easier it will be to grow the group because they'll naturally share something they enjoy, and invite their friends.

Think about your ideal member. Are they male or female or both? Older? Younger? Educated? Political party? Religion? Income? There are many variables to consider.

You want to solidify in your mind the particular topic or topics your group will cover. Here's an example: let's say you're trying to attract Italian food lovers to share recipes, cooking techniques, and eventually offer them a paid cookbook or collection of recipes. Do you think they'd be more apt to join a Facebook group called "Italian Food," or one called "Cook and Enjoy Delicious Italian Favorites"? The second one sounds more exciting, more fun, and is more targeted to people who love to cook and eat Italian food.

Targeting your group members will create a much closer sense of community and camaraderie within your group. And that will help you keep a good number of loyal members in your group month after month. Being more precise rather than less in attracting members will pay off in another way, too: it'll make finding your group easier!

When you think of the fact that there are over 1.5 billion daily searches performed on Facebook, you realize there's a good reason to be precise. So give your group a name that uses keywords to describe the group - Cook and Enjoy Delicious Italian Favorites is a prime example.

If you put some time into researching your ideal audience, in the beginning, it'll pay off in the end by allowing you to find the exact members who will actually enjoy your group and become active, loyal members.

## Ask Questions to Encourage Engagement

Nothing will sink your Facebook group faster than lack of participation by the members. So one of your primary objectives as the group administrator needs to be encouraging engagement on posts that you create and getting others in the group to post their posts in the group.

One of the most effective ways to increase engagement in your group is to ask questions! People love to answer questions because it gives them an opportunity to talk about what they like, don't like, give opinions, and offer advice. You can ask on-topic questions at random, or have a "Question of the Day."

In asking questions of your group, you'll not only create engagement, but you'll also gain valuable insight into what your ideal customers want to know or learn, and that will help when you begin to offer them products to purchase.

If you're having a problem coming up with questions to ask in your group, try this: Do a simple google search but start your search term with a "question word" such as why, are, who, etc. Just use the word, and your primary search term, and see what comes up! You'll get lots of ideas for lots of questions this way, and it can help to write them all down or keep them in an online document that you can refer to when you're stumped for a new question to ask.

Another great idea is to ask your group members about their experiences.
- "Have you ever had to … ?"
- "What do you do when … ?"
- "What's your personal experience with … ?"

These types of questions create an opportunity to have your members tell a story about their experiences, and people love to tell and hear stories,

so it's a win-win for everyone involved. And don't forget to add your stories, too!

When you first open up your group, you'll have to bear the burden of most of the content that gets posted. Set up a posting schedule so that you're creating a consistent stream of valuable information in the group. Keep track of the times of the day when you get the most engagement on your posts, and tailor your posting schedule to those times. After awhile you should see more and more people contributing on their own, as it becomes more hands-off for you. Don't forget that even if other people are posting, it's still your responsibility to attend to the group, engage with your members, and watch out for SPAM.

# Create a Facebook Fan Page to Promote Your Facebook Group

After you've created your Facebook group, you'll, of course, be interested in growing your group by having people who are interested in your topic join the group and become active members. One of the absolute best ways to make this happen is by directing the individuals who have liked your Fan Page to the Group.

The reason Fan Pages work so well is that you can gain "likes" to your Fan Page, which can in time turn into new members for your group. With over a billion people visiting Facebook each day, and over 4.5 billion "likes" per day, you only need to acquire a tiny percentage of this audience to begin growing your page in a big way.

If you don't already have a Fan Page for your topic, it's super easy to create one. Let's get started!

Click on the down arrow shown on the far right side of the top menu on Facebook, then click on "Create Page." You'll need to choose a category for your page out of those shown. Don't get hung up on this - you can always change it later on.

Add a description of the page, what it's about, and why people should like it! Be upbeat and positive, and don't try to sell anything in this section. You can use the same exact description you've used for your group to make things easier, but make sure your description makes your page seem interesting and fun. You'll get far more likes if the page looks like it's going to be worthwhile liking and visiting.

Add a profile picture, and add this page to your "favorites" so that it's easily accessible when you're on Facebook. The profile picture doesn't have to be a picture of you. It should be an image that represents the topic of your page. Now add the same cover photo that you have for your Facebook group.

Now, you'll need to enter in some information regarding who you want to attract to this fan page - choose the appropriate demographics, and interest that are similar to those that your page will be about.

Now, invite some people who you think would be interested in the page to like the page. You can do this in the left sidebar by clicking "Invite" next to their name.

That's it! Your page is now complete, and you can begin to work on promotion!