



## SEARCHING FOR SIGNS OF ENGAGING FRIENDS ON FACEBOOK

([Blog post: 4/11/12](#))

The first obstacle to overcome in Facebook fan-building is not falling into the [Kevin Costner Syndrome](#) trap. This is so named for those who mistakenly believe that once they've built their fan page, the fans will come. It doesn't work that way.

Remember how the Blues Brothers did it long ago? They drove all around Chicago's south side with an enormous speaker strapped to the roof of the Bluesmobile announcing their one-night show. Like the guys wearing sunglasses at night, it takes a lot of promotion to get folks to check out your Facebook show.

Hurdle number two: Just because you get them to "Like" you (a la Sally Fields) doesn't mean they'll engage with you. So even if you get a zillion "Likes" it doesn't necessarily convert into conversations.

Social media marketing is much more like a warm up act. You know? This is the advance scout area. This is where the not-so-well-known-but-brilliant comedian plays his act. S/he's warming up your audience for you, making sure they understand what they'd get from you, providing information, making sure their seats are okay and that nothing's gone wrong.

Remember, the warm up act plays in front of the big curtain. This is how you get closer contact with your customers and prospects before they jump over to your website. Do it very well and your audience will be stomping the floor with their feet, whistling, applauding and shouting for you to kick off the show – all warmed up and rarin' to go!

### Filling the Seats

Here are some basic strategies and tactics to take you from zero fans to tons in no time. Start with a finished Timeline page complete with cover and profile photos, working tabs and a few key posts to provide some information about your business. (Expecting folks to Like your page before all the scenery has been installed looks unprofessional.)

- **Share Your Page** (Admin Panel > Build Audience > Share Your Page) with all your closest friends. In your post, ask your friends to Share your page's post to their own Timelines, Groups and any others they can think of to share it with. Repeat frequently. (Depending upon your audience that could be weekly or monthly. If you are regularly adding new Friends and Likes to your personal and fan page, you will reach a wider audience with reposting of this request.)
- **Invite Friends** (or Email Contacts – also under Build Audience in the Admin Panel). You can choose your existing friends one at a time from here if you wish. And if you use a public email service such as AOL, Yahoo or Hotmail, Facebook can access your Address Book to broadcast your request for Likes.
- **Choose your strategy:** Do you need tons and tons of Likes very fast from all over geographically? If so, consider using Facebook Ads (Admin Panel > Build Audience > Create an Ad). These are vastly cheaper than Google Ads and may be a good long-term strategy. However, if you are satisfied with growing your fan base organically, bypass the PPC ads to search out your own fans (a la The Blues Brothers).

### Searching for Fans

You must reach out first. Friend and Like others and their pages before working on coaxing them to your new business fan page.

- Make the most of Search! First, be sure you've already switched to **Use Facebook as Page** (under Home) before searching for pages and friends to Like on your fan page, or you may find yourself having Liked a zillion pages as yourself instead of as your business.
- Begin armed with your list of keywords for your business to review on Facebook, in order of importance. For example, if you own a shoe store, not only is "shoes" one of the most important keywords for your business but also the name of your town if you rely heavily upon local foot traffic for the majority of your business. So you'd want to include your town name. Further, if your business relies heavily upon foot traffic from neighboring stores, include them in your keyword list.
- Search for **Pages, Places, People, Groups** and so on (the filters in the **Search Filters** in the left sidebar) using these keywords in order of importance to you. Like as many as seem appropriate for your business. If you wish to avoid Liking

nearby competitors, focus more upon Pages and Places that are too far away to be competitors. Don't forget to include Product and Service brand names, business names, and descriptors in your searches. If you are a reseller, you will be able to Share posts from the brands' posts that you resell.

- Set aside a limited amount of time each week to perform these searches so that you aren't overwhelmed by the sea of possibilities. There is no Edge of the Internet. You will never be done searching because new choices will be added daily. Use an egg timer if necessary to stay on schedule.
- If your business relies heavily upon your business neighbors and partners, make it a top priority to pay close attention to their posts and comments. The more you support one another, the greater the collective good results for all. You will begin to see possibilities to Share from geographic neighbors' pages and posts.

### **Mingle with the Crowd**

- Now that you've acquired Friends and Pages to see scroll by in your News Feed, you need to take advantage of all their hot content to populate your own page and add new Friends and Likes. Visit their pages and review their own Likes and Recommendations. Add to your own Likes from their lists.
- While you're visiting, Share one of their posts to your own page if it makes a good fit for your own goals and strategy. Click on Share below the post and choose On Your Own Page instead of On Your Timeline to ensure it posts to your fan page and not your personal page.
- And while you're at it, comment on your Friend's posts on their Timeline. Mingle out there away from your own fan page on others' pages. They will be far more likely to visit and Like you organically if you show a little friendship on their page first. Don't forget to visit and Like various Facebook Groups too. These can be an invaluable resource. If the Group is Closed, request an invitation. Many are open to new members – particularly if you contribute to the conversations on the Group's page.

### **Start the Engagement Engine**

For many businesses this is the hardest part. You may have [fantastic content](#) and even be receiving lots of Likes for your individual posts, but audiences have a tendency to sit back in their seats watching the show without sending the love back on stage.

I can tell you from firsthand experience, you know exactly when the first laugh or rumble should occur during a performance to know whether or not your audience is engaged. If you don't get it, don't panic. Just keep at it to bring them around.

Here are a few things to review to see if your delivery is off the mark:

1. Are you using statements instead of questions for 99% of your Status Updates? If so, you're discouraging active engagement. While you can continue to state your opinion and/or educate your fans, add questions to the end of your posts to draw them out of their shells:
  - a. "What do you think?"
  - b. "Would you do it this way? Or that way?"
  - c. "Please comment and tell me if you think this is a good idea?"
  - d. "What would you do differently?"
2. Have you used Question/Poll Updates to engage your fans? If not, make a list of types of questions to ask:
  - a. "Would you like this product from us in blue or green?"
  - b. "Would you buy this product?"
  - c. "What features would you add?"
  - d. "What additional features would make you leap to buy this?"
  - e. "Test your knowledge about our business! What year did we open our doors?" (This is where you employ Facebook's Poll post feature. Let fans choose from a multiple choice option or add their own answers.)
3. Are you posting only pictures of your office, manufacturing facility and products with descriptive captions? Honor your fans and clients by posting pictures of them – and be sure you are Tagging them so the updates will appear in your fans' Timelines for greater outreach.

4. Create games and engagement with your photos. If you are posting photos of products or manufacturing or offices, ask fans to guess whose desk it belongs to? What does this machine make? Ask fans to post photos of themselves using your products. Give a prize for best use. Let your fans vote for which photo(s) is best!

If all of this seems a bit overwhelming break it down into bite size tasks, hitting one at time as you can the hang of it. Keep to your success is [setting and keeping a schedule](#) even when you think you could or should be posting more often. Get a simple routine down pat before expanding it to more activity you must undertake.

Does this help you map out tactics you can use to grow your fan base in Facebook? What would you add to this list from your own bag of tricks that has worked?

## GOOD (FACEBOOK) READS

Here are [Five Things You Need to Fix on Your Facebook Business Timeline](#) before you begin blasting out Like requests.

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If you lament the loss of Facebook's fan-gate pages, take a look at [Facebook ads can still lead to specific tabs, even with default feature gone](#). Fan gate pages aren't completely dead!

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While [this blog post](#) at **The Buzz Bin** focuses upon how wineries can take advantage of Facebook's new Timeline features, don't forget: [Storytelling with Timeline: Top Three Things to Remember](#).

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If you're truly more interesting in using Facebook Advertising to grow your fan base, please read [The 2012 Facebook Advertising Report](#). This information from **Social Fresh** will provide interesting insights as to how you can target your advertising.

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Some of these apps shown in **Social Media Examiner's** [Top 10 Facebook Apps for Building Custom Pages & Tabs](#) may no longer work since the post is from last July, but much of the content is quite valuable. Alternatively, you may want to check out their [Top 10 Facebook Apps for Fan Engagement and Building Community](#), which is more recent and has a few great links.

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It should be noted that Facebook Apps (many of which are free) can be a bit tricky to find, install and test. **Social Media Examiner** again provides a step-by-step guide on [How to Find and Add Facebook Apps to Your Facebook Page](#).

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Here's one I found to be very cool to engage your fans. It requires a wee bit of work. But if you have strong fan support from all over, you might want to learn [How to Add Photos to Your Facebook Map](#).

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Ready for Facebook's Premium Ads? Here's a place to start: [Facebook's New, Entirely Social Ads Will Recreate Marketing](#). I'll be doing some exploring myself!

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Are you following any Facebook Interest Lists? I'm finding them very informative and useful, learning about new subjects and things I wouldn't have otherwise known about without this new feature: [Facebook Launches 'Interest Lists' \(Why Marketers Should Care\)](#). If you're an art lover (or have another passion), I strongly urge you to find and follow (or create your own Interest List) in this topic.

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Do you have Subscribers? To your personal page? If this is news to you, and you are your brand, I strongly urge you to [enable the Subscribe button](#) on your personal page. This dramatically alters who can see specific types of posts (including non-friends). Enabling this feature may also dramatically change to whom you can promote and Share Your Page for business.

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Are you a fan of great photography? Facebook quietly changed their [photo protocols for image files](#) (a few weeks before their acquisition Monday of Instagram). You may now upload much larger photo files than ever before....