

CHAPTER NINE—I'M ON FACEBOOK, NOW WHAT?

Facebook is like a global business networking luncheon that is open 24/7. It's a site that encourages people to (politely) introduce themselves to strangers and invite them to become "friends." It makes it very easy to share multimedia information, making it much more valuable than the usual business card exchange. Not only that, but on Facebook, there are interesting conversations going on around the clock and around the world where you can participate, add value, meet good prospects and demonstrate your expertise.

Not that kind of "friend."

On Facebook, it's OK to talk to strangers. In fact, it's encouraged if you plan to use the site for business. If you went to a luncheon and only talked to people you already know, you wouldn't get much new business. It works the same on Facebook.

Some of the people who are your Facebook friends will be people you actually know in real life, either in person or via prior email contact. Facebook is a valuable way to stay in touch with these contacts. But Facebook's real value comes in making it easy to meet people who might become customers and whom you might never meet in real life.

Of course, as with a live event, there are courtesies to be observed. That's one reason it's so important to read the rules up front, so that you understand the culture of a site and the expectations of its users. It's also a good idea to "lurk" for a while and watch what others do before jumping in. When you set out to meet new people on Facebook, look for something to indicate that they might be interested in your expertise or type of business.

There are two ways to do this: members of groups and friends of friends. When you join (or start) a group on a particular topic, odds are that the other members share an interest. So if you

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specialize in life coaching, joining groups on life balance, stress reduction and navigating life transitions might be good to meet people with similar interests. You can also find a well-known author, speaker or opinion leader who has a large following and introduce yourself to other “friends” of this expert as a fellow “friend” with shared interests.

What if someone you don’t know “friends” you? It’s OK. Treat it as you would at a networking meeting if someone new walked up and introduced himself. You would exchange polite conversation, share business card information, and explore how you might be able to help each other. You would not share personal or financial information or other “secure” information. Maintain the same kind of common sense in the online world, and you’re unlikely to experience problems. If you do add a friend who becomes rude, intrusive or inappropriate, you can block and “un-friend” that person easily.

Facebook and business

If you intend to use your Facebook page primarily for business, set up a “fan” page which is a format designed for businesses. That way, if you also want a Facebook page just for personal use, you can create a “personal” page and keep it invitation-only for family and friends.

How can you use your Facebook page for business? Here are some ideas to get you started. (Add the ones that apply to your goals to your social media marketing matrix.)

- Share tips, links to articles, short audios and videos to enhance your credibility and solve problems
- Meet new people and keep in touch with existing clients, prospects and colleagues
- Find and renew connections with co-workers and colleagues you’ve lost track of

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- Invite your Facebook friends to online and real-life events, and post audio/video snippets of events afterwards
- Post your Facebook address on your web site to invite web visitors to join you online
- Use Facebook's photo feature to showcase case studies and other finished products
- Keep your Facebook site fresh by adding an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed that automatically posts your blog, Twitter or podcast updates
- If you're already posting business video on YouTube or business photos on Flickr, you can easily add those posts to your Facebook page
- Get to know other users and make a reputation as a helpful expert by posting answers to forum questions and making meaningful contributions to group discussions. Better yet, start your own group!
- Send virtual birthday cards for a personal touch.
- Offer your products for sale in the Marketplace.
- Liven things up with polls and quizzes you create.

Anatomy of a Facebook page

- Home: This is a page only you can see. It's your dashboard, where you can read your incoming messages, add applications, see what people have posted on your Wall and change your settings.
- Profile: this is the main page other people see. The information you add shows up here, as well as comments you approve for public visibility.
- "What are you doing now?" This box works like Twitter, and it gives you the chance to send a one-line update. It's a great way to let readers know about upcoming events,

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news, and highlights. You can also use it to ask a question, forward a link to a great article, blog post or video, or tell readers about something interesting.

- **Wall:** This is the main, public area of your site. You can make it so that only your posts show on the Wall, or allow your friends to post. To keep it focused on business, it's best to keep the Wall showing your posts and comments on those posts.
- **Info:** This tab shares your profile. You'll want to fill in the business-appropriate details, and avoid extras that are too personal. You can also share information about your education and business experience as well as links to your main web sites. Be sure to add a current business-appropriate photo. It's a key page to show your credibility!
- **Notes:** You can have your blog posts feed to your Wall, or add them on your notes page. Or, you can feed from Twitter to one and from a podcast or YouTube account to the other. It's a place you can post information with an RSS feed so your site gets updates automatically. You can also update your Notes manually like a blog.
- **Profile badge:** If you've seen the Facebook logo on someone else's web site along with their photo and a link to their Facebook page, this is how they created it. Great for linking your new page to your other sites.
- **Boxes:** This tab is where all the other extras you add with the application tools will live on your page.

Customizing with applications

Facebook offers a wide variety of extras that range from the very silly to the extremely useful. Since many people use Facebook exclusively to stay in touch with friends, there are

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extras that enable you to send your friend a virtual hug, a digital cocktail, and all kinds of personality surveys, among other wild and wacky things. While these are fun between friends, it's best to avoid them on your business site.

On the other hand, Facebook offers some great extras, called “applications,” that let you customize your page and add value. Applications change all the time, and sites are always adding and deleting choices. These are some standard types of applications found in many of the top social media sites.

Here are my favorite applications for business and ideas on how to use them:

- Events: A great way to share your upcoming speaking engagements, teleseminars/webinars, seminars and workshops.
- Videos: Share your business videos, either by uploading them individually or using your YouTube page to update automatically.
- Photos: Share pictures of finished products, photos from events, your book cover, and other visuals to bring your page to life.
- Groups: The place to meet and connect with others who share a common interest
- Broadcast: A way to share your articles with all your Facebook friends.
- Blog RSS feeder: Here's where you can enter the information necessary to have your blog, podcast or Twitter feed automatically update your Facebook site.
- My LinkedIn profile: If you're also on LinkedIn, you can create a shortcut to your public profile page.
- Squidoo Connect: Make it easy for your Facebook friends to find your Squidoo lenses.

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- Birthday Cards: Makes it easy to send a virtual card to all your Facebook friends on their birthdays.
- Memorable web address: Creates a Facebook “badge” you can place on your other sites to make it easy for visitors to find you on Facebook.
- Poll Daddy: Add interest to your page by asking questions and posting the poll results.
- Marketplace: If you offer tangible products for sale, this links you to an online retail page where you can pay to list your products.

Results Reminder: Use Facebook like a networking event that never ends.

Rule of 30™ What 30 pieces of existing information could you add to your new Facebook page to make it more interesting and valuable?

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