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The Art & Science of Growing a Fan Base on Facebook

Submitted by [Debbie Hemley](#) on March 22, 2011 – 5:34 am [One Comment](#)

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Whether your Facebook page has 100 fans or 50,000 fans, a Facebook page requires ongoing attention to the type of content you post, frequency of posts, understanding about your users—what brings them to a page, what engages them to like, comment and share, and what keeps them coming back. If you're serious about your Facebook page you cannot take a laissez-faire attitude, pages require ongoing commitment.

From paid tools such as contests, sweepstakes, campaigns and Facebook ads to more organic approaches such as widgets, like boxes, landing pages, calls-to-actions, quizzes and including your Facebook link in email signatures, newsletters, web links and more—businesses strive to keep promotion of their Facebook

page in the forefront of their marketing efforts.

Facebook's built-in analytics tool, [Facebook Insights](#), provides detailed graphs and charts, and when analyzed on a regular basis, businesses can glean valuable insights as to what's working and what's not. It's easy enough to change direction. For instance, if you see that certain posts are receiving more engagement than others, and certain days and times of posts are more popular, then you can be sure to replicate those actions. If your Facebook demographics tell you you're attracting a different age group, gender breakdown, and if more of your users are coming from other cities and countries than you might have expected, you can use that information too to make certain your posts speak to your audience. Not only that, you can make sure you're speaking to them on the days of the week and times of the day when they're online.

Photos, videos and podcasts are also known to be tremendous drivers for Facebook users and the media consumption graph within Facebook Insights will show you how your users are engaging with those media. [JD Lasica](#) writes in the post, "15 Ways to Increase your Brand's Impact on Facebook," about ways to stay on track and make your updates count.

For this post, we spoke with businesses from all industries and sizes who have 1000+ fans (likers) on their pages. We asked them about specific steps they have taken to grow their fan base, their use of photo and videos, calls-to-actions they've used, how they use Facebook Insights and recommendations they have for others.

The majority of the businesses rely very heavily on the analytics data, posting of videos and photos, posting schedules and content strategy, and employing a myriad of different types of actions to engage users. These businesses have all seen growth from the steps they've taken. If you are actively trying to grow your Facebook fan base you might want to consider exploring these tried and true tactics described by businesses in this post.



What Businesses Have to Say

What steps have you taken to grow your fan base?

We hold a weekly quiz and giveaway. At the end of a person taking the quiz they click a "Connect" button which posts their quiz results to their Facebook wall to spread the word about the Facebook page to everyone on their Friends list. **We also run Facebook ads targeted to our demographics.**

Michael C. Podlesny, Mike the Gardener Enterprises, LLC [Facebook](#)

Recently, we did a campaign giving away \$1,000 for the charity/nonprofit that got the most votes on our Facebook page. People would vote for the organization they felt most deserved it, and then the viral marketing part of it was left up to them. We put them in charge of spreading the message to their networks to also come Like 352 Media Group.

Erin Everhart, 352 Media Group, [Facebook](#)

When I first set up my company Facebook page I used Facebook ads to get people to come to it in the first place. **I also searched for other types of Facebook pages related to my business and then I would post on their wall a link to my page. The result has been amazing.** I now have over 2200 people on my page which has increased my sales and is raising awareness for miscarriage, stillbirth and infant loss at the same time.

Michelle Murray, Author, *I Will Hold You In My Heart Forever*, [Facebook](#)

We place Facebook ads for various store events and sales which attract people to “like” our page. We also print our Facebook url in all of our print material. The viral nature of FB also helps spread our pages. **I frequently use calls to action such as “call to set up you appointment”, “Will you be next”, “come in tomorrow for.”**

Anne Puthoff, Emmys Bridal, [Facebook](#)

We started a contest in January for our clients, Houck Portraits. **We posted our favorite portrait from every session in November and December and allowed our clients and their friends and family to vote for their favorite portrait. The winner received a complimentary 8×10 of that portrait.** The winning portrait received over 200 votes. To vote, people simply clicked “like” under their favorite portrait. While they could only vote for a particular portrait once they were able to vote for as many portraits as they wanted. In 7-10 days we had around 30,000 page views. Of course many of those were the same people looking at multiple portraits but **it increased our views and added around 400 fans to our Facebook page.**

Hilary Hamblin, [Momentum Consulting](#), Facebook, Houck Portraits [Facebook](#)

We use Facebook’s “like” function near each of our products so that our users not only can tell their networks that they like us as a brand, but what exactly they like— whether it’s a recipe app or a particular game app.

Joe McGurk, ALOT, [Facebook](#)

In October 2010, Pathways began running **bi-monthly Tummy Time Baby Photo Contests on our Facebook page as a way to promote the page and engage our fans.** The entire idea behind the contest is to ask as many people as you can to vote on your baby’s tummy time photo, as it spreads more awareness about this public health issue and encourages optimal infant development...Another effort we have been doing is **tagging other pages within a post.**

Amanda Krupa, Pathways Awareness, [Facebook](#)

We currently have a **“Like” box on our homepage and also ask people to like us in our email newsletters. That currently brings us in 50-100 fans a week, depending how many emails we send out. We also ran a contest late last year on Facebook that netted us about 3,500 fans,** which we promoted very heavily in email and also tested using Facebook ads. To keep people interested and engaged (so that we don’t lose fans) we run promotional offers including coupons and special sales on products, and we also post videos and pictures about OpticsPlanet or involving the hobbies and sports we cater to.

Alessandro Minnoci, Optics Planet, [Facebook](#)

I am active in several forums and message boards and always include my social media links in my signature. **I also teach classes through community colleges on my subject and remind my students of my pages and links in class, as well as through my newsletter.**

Bethany Mooradian, Queen of the Random Job [Facebook](#)

The University of St. Francis in Joliet, Ill., is a small private university with a total enrollment of about 3,300 undergraduate and graduate students. To grow our Facebook fan base, we've **systematically included the Facebook icon on all our marketing materials, specifically in communication with our target audiences. We've also used our own employees to promote the university page and suggest it to their friends via their personal pages.** These simplistic methods have allowed us to grow our fan base to over 2,500 in two years.

Clare Briner, University of St. Francis, [Facebook](#)

Customers and friends of AmeriBag are introduced to the Facebook page on our website, in our email distributions, email signatures, sales and promotions materials. When given the opportunity to connect with a customer **we encourage them to stay in touch through this venue for the most up-to-date information, exciting news and announcements about our products.**

Thea Linscott, AmeriBag, [Facebook](#)

Showing a personal side of the company on Facebook—sharing our human side. One way we did this way by **sharing holiday photos and personal messages from most of our employees from November 2010 – January 2011.**

Michael Araten, K'nex, [Facebook](#)

On our website, which receives thousands of hits, **we embed the Facebook Fan Page Box which shows the current amount of fans and even pictures of individuals.** This gives it a more personal approach and encourages people to check out our fan page. Once they see that other people like us, it raises curiosity. **One of the most important elements is using a custom landing page.** When non fans first visit your Facebook Page, make sure to put in clear and concise text what your company/business is as well as a strong call to action to like the Facebook Page. Use images where possible. As a result of this our highest converting email opt-in form is from our Facebook welcome page. Speaking of email, we always include links to our Facebook Page in our newsletter. It's important to push your Facebook page at every channel possible.

Don Sabatini, Secret Entourage, [Facebook](#)

Voices.com started a Fan page in March 2010, after attending PodCamp Toronto. Since we started the fan page we have grown to over 15,000 fans and counting! I publish our blog Vox Daily, photos/albums, status updates, links and videos on the daily. **I like to make sure to post 4-6 posts everyday. We have recently started using Facebook ads that are targeted to potential clients and voiceover talents. We have seen an increase in fans from 10-20 to 100-200 per day.**

Ashley Hall, Voices.com, [Facebook](#)

We make it a fully integrated part of our Company. All of our employees are fans/likes and they participate in discussions and comments. They share a lot of company stuff with their friends. We scour the Web for interesting articles and updates about a broad range of business topics and then share them daily with our fans. **We have a high filter on content; we rarely “advertise” our business. We treat Facebook fans as real friends**, i.e. we want to do our very best to provide them with interesting and useful business information. If they take an interest in our Company (which they do over time), then great – but we don't pander or “market” to them. We also are sure to cross promote our FB posts with our followers on Twitter.

FB is a great place to post deeper/more content, so we get a lot of RTs and link clicks to our FB page via Twitter that result in new “likes.” **We have 100% organically grown our fan base. We have used zero ads or other paid tools to grow the page.** It is slower that way, but our fan base on FB is really involved.

Our posts get a lot of comments, likes and shares. While we will likely do FB ads and other things as we accelerate, the core base of fans we have now are strong, involved and bringing new fans with them every day.

Alex Lawrence, Lendio, [Facebook](#),

I have run a Facebook Ad three times which has been successful each time. I have run contests to get people to promote my page, **I actively share my page on other fan pages without being intrusive (now with the new “Use Facebook as your fan page” option this has become even easier)** and I actively add new friends, potential clients, potential joint venture partners and potential teachers to my personal profile and once I start to build the relationship with these people I invite them to “like” my fan page.

Michele Scism, Decisive Minds, [Facebook](#)

We made a conscience decision to use Facebook as part of our marketing strategies. All our employees have our Facebook as part of their email signature. We ask our fans to recruit other like minded people. **We have done some cross promotions with non- competitors, we promote them and they promote us to each others fan base. We used our Linked connections and Facebook ads.**

Bert Martinez, Bert Martinez Communications, [Facebook](#)

We put a “Welcome” landing tab in, with a bunch of featured sweepstakes that I handpicked. This started to get some attention and the fan base started to grow because now, facebookers who came to our page saw some of what we had to offer, and something eye-catching. **The other huge step was getting like boxes with pictures of users on every page, as well as the like buttons that “like” individual pages— these are two different calls to action.** One makes a user our fan, and one has the user share the link to the particular page he is “liking.” Some popular sweepstakes get upwards of 50 “likes,” each of which is visible to the friends of the “liker” for a period of time- and if a friend of said “liker” navigates to our page, Facebook will tell them that their friend has already liked that content. This gives us both exposure as well as social validation and is central to growing on Facebook, twitter, or any social platform.

Navid Dardashti, Win Prizes Online, [Facebook](#)



What recommendations do you have for businesses who are looking to grow their fan base?

Don't only post about business. These are humans you are interacting with. They like to talk about other relevant things from time to time. It should be 80% business and 20% fun. Stay away from politics and negative subject at all times.

Janice M. Celeste, Fine Art Cinematographer, [Facebook](#)

Number one is interaction—you have to interact with the people who go out of their way to comment or post on your wall. Acknowledging and having a conversation with your Likers is crucial to Facebook success...Keep in mind, **Facebook shouldn't be something you have solely to generate revenue—I look at it as a gauge to what our Likers—guests and potential guest are feeling. It is an amazing tool to gauge personal satisfaction.**

Jakeup Rios, Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort and Spa, [Facebook](#)

What's really crucial is having a page that people want to Like, share with friends, comment, post photos, etc. **A presence isn't enough these days.** Next, figure out what digital fans you already have. A perfect example of this is your email list. If you have customers who already opted in to your news, they may also opt in to your Facebook page. Dedicate an email blast to simply informing your customers that you now have a page. Finally, **keep at it! Keep adding content, posting photos, sharing interesting articles and more. Just stick with it— if you have a great page, fans will come.**

Jenna Weinerman, Chelsea Piers Management, [Facebook](#)

The best advice I got when I was starting last year is this: **Building your fan base is a marathon, not a sprint. In other words, it takes time and consistent effort, and it will pay off as you see more and more people become fans.** The second piece of advice I have is to post relevant information. There is so much noise out there in social media. So if you post well-written information that people want to know about, you will set yourself apart, and people will show their appreciation by supporting your page. Finally, share other people's postings, links, etc. There is a lot of quid pro quo in social media. People love seeing their information reposted, and they will reciprocate nine times out of ten by sharing the information you post with their fan base, thereby expanding your reach exponentially.

Karen Seiger, Markets of New York City, [Facebook](#)

Facebook is not just one-way communication. It allows you to communicate directly with people who already like your business and provides a forum for them to communicate with you. Just as in any form of marketing, with Facebook it is important to understand the medium and the audience. Facebook messages should be immediately engaging and brief. **Photos, videos and links add images to a post making it even more appealing. But overall, it's important to pay attention to what your facebook fans like and respond to.**

Lynn Swann, The Greenbrier, [Facebook](#)

Consistent branding across your various channels is important so the fans get the same look, feel, etc. whether on your website, Facebook page, etc. **Consistent and coordinated messaging across those same channels is important too.** Some larger companies have created a new roll called Chief Content Officer who is responsible for ensuring just this – that your Twitter staff, Facebook staff, web site staff, print ad staff are all consistent with both the content and timing of the messaging. **We recommend trying to get your fans to interact more with your Facebook fan page by posting questions on the wall and trying to get more feedback from them. Being a catalyst of interesting, online conversations is one strategy.** For example, if you learn what the hot buttons are for your audience, you can play to that. Also, we suggest allocating some marketing budget to Facebook ads. Even \$20 per day can grab you thousands of fans within a short period of time. Finally, never ignore reader comments. Nothing is more disenchanting to a reader than to invest their valuable time to contribute something which falls on deaf ears. Reader comments are a gift and you should always thank someone for a gift.

Randall Mitchelson, National Web Leads, [Facebook](#)

“Facebook is about connections, it's as simple and as complicated as that. Rather than get caught up in the technological aspects of your Facebook fan page, think first about how you connect with people—by sharing your unique personality, your interests, your passions, by exchanging valuable information, and by engaging in a two-way dialogue. **Consider the personality of your business, the interests and passions of your employees and customers, and what kinds of valuable information you have to share; then start sharing it with and, most importantly responding to, your fans. I guarantee you'll see results!**

Michael Araten, K'Nex, [Facebook](#)

I found the best way to jump start a Facebook Page is with a two step strategy. With every new Facebook Page, you're going to start with zero fans. **The quickest way is to invite your personal friends to your Fan Page.** The downside to this is that when you Suggest to Friends, you have to individually select each friend one by one. To bypass this, **create a Friends List and add all your current and future friends to it. This is a one time tedious task.** So the next time you Suggest to Friends, all you need to do is select that Friends List from the drop down filter and it will give you the option to Select All. Literally one click invitations. If you have a list of customer email addresses or an email newsletter, this next trick works great with the previous strategy. Facebook has a Find Friends feature where you can import a list of email addresses and it will automatically send friend requests to everyone on that list that is on Facebook and invite others to join Facebook if they are not. Once you added a significant number of new friends, repeat the last strategy by adding them to a Friend List for easy suggest to friends.

Don Sabatini, Secret Entourage, [Facebook](#)

Facebook ads are a great way to target a specific demographic and people with similar interests. **Ask questions! People love to put their two cents in.** Also, people love to talk about what their passionate about and what ticks them off! **Make sure to engage your customers daily. I recommend doing 3-6 posts a day. Monitor your progress with Facebook Insights! Do a search on your brand to find where people are talking about you.** [Socialmention.com](http://socialmention.com/) <http://socialmention.com/> is a great tool to start with. Don't be afraid to step in when the conversation goes sour about your brand. It's much better to acknowledge someone's concerns than to ignore it.

Ashley Hall, Voices.com, [Facebook](#)

If a business wants to grow their fan page, they should **focus on giving value, not trying to get people to buy something or click on a website.** We've grown a LOT since we simply started offering value in the form of education/humor as opposed to simply asking people to do something for us instead.

Jordan Harbinger, The Art of Charm, [Facebook](#).

Be consistent in your Facebook presence. Post often and keep your page interesting to encourage your fans to invite their friends to "like" you too!

Anne Puthoff, Emmy's Bridal, [Facebook](#)

How have you grown your fan base? What suggestions do you have? What will you try from these suggestions?

One Comment »

-  [Lileth](#) says:
[March 22, 2011 at 3:37 pm](#)

Growing a fan base on Facebook is very popular nowadays especially to people who's business has a [Facebook Business Page](#) . Making it unique and very informative inorder to invite people and like their business and get more traffic through it.

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