

Facebook tips for community groups

Simple information and tips for small, volunteer-run community organisations

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What's what on Facebook: Profiles, Pages and Groups

Profiles

Every person who uses Facebook needs a Facebook Profile. This is an individual account, in the name of an individual person. Members of community organisations need to have their own personal Facebook Profile in order to set up Facebook Pages, Groups or Events for their organisation.

Pages

A Facebook Page is the tool that organisations use to have their own presence on Facebook. Once set up, it is a bit like a Facebook Profile but for an organisation rather than a person. You can post in different places on Facebook on behalf of your Page (e.g. on Groups or on other organisations' Pages). This means you can post *as your organisation* rather than as yourself as an individual.

A Facebook Page also works a bit like a website or a noticeboard. Your organisation can post things on it, and people who are interested can read them. People show they are interested in your Page by "liking" it, and by liking, sharing or commenting on posts on the Page. The more someone engages with the Page, the more updates they will see about it when they look at their own Facebook newsfeed.

Groups

A Facebook Group is like a forum or chatroom. It's a place where people can have discussions. It's a useful thing to set up if you want to create a space for your community to interact together. Groups can be set up and run by individuals (via their Facebook Profile), or by organisations (via their Facebook Page).

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How to get people to engage with your Facebook Page

Always include something other than just text in your posts

- ◇ This creates visual impact & makes your post stand out.
- ◇ You can share photos, videos, links, Facebook Events, Facebook Polls, Facebook Notes, Facebook Polls
- ◇ Use hashtags to help people find your content.

Each post needs thought, preparation and personality

- ◇ You can switch between posting as your Page (for your organisation) or as yourself personally
- ◇ Use first person: “we” if posting as your organisation, “I” if posting as you.
- ◇ Use a conversational tone.

Keep your posts short

- ◇ You can use “Notes” if you want to write something longer. Share the note, rather than writing a really long post.

Don't post too often.

- ◇ 4 – 6 posts per week is ideal.
- ◇ Never post more than twice per day, and spread these across the day.

Think about the timing of your posts

- ◇ Evenings and weekends generate more engagement from people
- ◇ You can “schedule” posts in advance: write them and tell Facebook to post them later.

Engage with other Pages and Groups

- ◇ Like other organisations' Pages as your Page
- ◇ Post, as your Page, in relevant Groups run by others. This will help people know your Page exists.
- ◇ Share other organisations' posts and events. When mentioning other organisations in your posts, tag them by typing @ and then their group name.

Reply to messages and comments quickly

- ◇ Acknowledge comments as soon as possible, by liking or replying.
- ◇ People can send direct messages to your Page. These won't be published, but are a way for people to contact your organisation directly. Make sure you reply promptly. Have a few people who can do this – don't leave it all up to one person.
- ◇ If you are unavailable for a period of time, you can set an automatic reply to tell people their message has been received and when you will be able to reply.

Make sure your contact details are published on the Page

- ◇ There is a particular place to put these so people can find them easily.

How to get people to use your Facebook Group

Acknowledge people

- ◇ Reply to them, Like their comments

Ask open questions to get discussions started

- ◇ If you want to consult on a specific issue, you could use a “Poll”.
- ◇ Tag people / Pages that you think will be interested in getting involved in the discussion, by typing @ followed by their name.

Encourage people to invite others to the Group.

- ◇ For example, if it is a neighbourhood group, write posts now and again reminding people to invite their neighbours.

If your organisation also has a Facebook Page, you can post in your Group *as your Page*.

- ◇ If you are posting on behalf of your organisation, its best to post as your Page, so that people can clearly see that you are posting as a representative of the organisation.

Have a few “moderators”

- ◇ These are people who keep an eye on the group and make sure everyone is playing nicely!
- ◇ Don't leave it all to one person.
- ◇ Have a way of communicating between moderators, so you can sort things out together. This could be a separate, closed group.
- ◇ Have a Code of Conduct that your group has agreed about how people will speak to each other, and pin this to the top of your Group.

Try to avoid making important decisions over Facebook.

- ◇ If there is a decision to be made, remind people when your next meeting is and how they can get involved.
- ◇ If people make suggestions or have ideas about what your organisation could be doing, acknowledge their ideas and remind them how they can get more involved in your organisation/association. Suggest adding the item to your next meeting agenda. Don't try to have important discussions on Facebook.

If there is a conflict, intervene early

- ◇ If people get into a disagreement, intervene early to avoid a long thread with lots of comments. Sometimes the best thing you can do is say something like “I think everyone's had their say here – let's agree to disagree and park this discussion for now”.
- ◇ Remind people about the Group's Code of Conduct, if necessary.

How to publicise events on Facebook

- ◇ Make a Facebook Event with all the information people need
- ◇ If your organisation has a Page, make sure the Page is the host of the Event (not you personally)
- ◇ If you are working with another organisation, make them “co-hosts” of the event. This will mean people who Like their Page will also see your event
- ◇ Post your Event on your Page and/or Group, and ask people to share it on their Profile and to invite their friends.
- ◇ Post it again as the event gets nearer
- ◇ Post it in other places (e.g. other local Groups)
- ◇ Post reminders about the event, and up to date information, in the Event itself. This will make sure everyone who has said they are interested in the event will be reminded about it.

More information & useful resources

Facebook Help Centre

Find out how to set up Pages, Groups, Events and more.

www.facebook.com/help

Social Media for Social Good

Book by Heather Mansfield. Available in the Resource Centre reference library

A Simple Guide to Digital and Social Media, Allsorts Youth Project

Toolkit by Allsorts Youth project

www.allsortsyouth.org.uk/resources/other-publications

Charity social media toolkit, Skills Platform

Useful overview of how to make the most of social media

www.skillsplatform.org/charitysocialmediatoolkit/