



Intro to Facebook

Does your Facebook business page have a customized web address? When first launched, a business page has a web address that does not represent the true name of a business or brand. A business page has to first receive 25 likes before a business owner can customize its Facebook business web address. Choose a web address that is easy to remember, represents your brand name, and if possible, is consistent across other social media platforms. Remember, the main benefit of selecting a customized web address is to make sharing on Facebook easier and more effective.

- Every 20 minutes, users share 1 million links, send 2 million friend requests and 3 million messages
- Facebook users spend 18 minutes each day sharing content
- The average person has 130 friends and is connected to 80 groups, pages, and events
- 48% of 18-34 year olds check Facebook when they wake up; 28% check Facebook before getting out of bed
- 81 million fake Facebook profiles also exist
- Facebook also has 680 million mobile users

Quick Tip

Does your Facebook business page have a customized web address? When first launched, a business page has a web address that does not represent the true name of a business or brand. A business page has to first receive 25 likes before a business owner can customize its Facebook business web address. Choose a web address that is easy to remember, represents your brand name, and if possible, is consistent across other social media platforms. Remember, the main benefit of selecting a customized web address is to make sharing on Facebook easier and more effective.

Things to Know

Learn all about Facebook's EdgeRank

- EdgeRank is the brains behind Facebook and controls how news appears in the newsfeed. The more you know about the brain, the more you can use that knowledge to build customer loyalty.
- EdgeRank scores each post made, or creates an edge. The score formula is straightforward. **Affinity:** The frequency of interactions between a person and a business page. **Weights:** The weights assigned to those same interactions; sharing something carries the greatest weight. **Decay:** Over time, EdgeRank learns a pattern of sharing which helps it push information that is demanded by users into newsfeeds. If a user doesn't interact with a page, decay increases.
- The objective is to create a high edge score between people and a business page through engagement. The higher the score, the more likely a potential customer will see something posted from a business page. Only about 4% of people return to the business pages they have liked. That means 96% of information about a page will be seen in the newsfeed. <http://whatisedgerank.com/>
- Calculate an average EdgeRank score for a business page here: <http://edgerankchecker.com/>

Learn Engagement Strategies to Build Customer Loyalty

- Learn to reciprocate when people interact on a business page to maximize the edge score. When people like a photograph, they can then be tagged in a reply. Reply when people like something. Tag them. This creates a higher edge score so the next time a business owner posts something, the probability of seeing that post will be higher.

Things to Know (Continued)

- Always check-in when arriving at the business location. A simple check-in is a non-intrusive way of marketing a business page. And when people (hint: potential customers), like the check-in, that message will be broadcast to their entire friend network – well, almost all the network due to the workings of EdgeRank..
- Never post a status update and then go to bed or be unavailable to reply to comments. Seventy percent of all engagement takes place within the first hour.

Learn all you can about your Facebook page data (Insights)

- Facebook provides data for review which can tell a business owner when to post, which posts have reached the most people, and so on. Study this. Know this. Learn when and what works best for the customers who follow the page.
<https://www.facebook.com/help/336893449723054>

Study Similar Pages to Learn about the Competition

- Follow similar pages. Or, put another way, follow the competition. Make note about how competitors make posts, when they post, the types of posts, and promotions used.
- Study how they interact with fans. Are they timely in their responses to customers? Are they courteous? How do they handle conflict on their page if a customer has a problem? It's invaluable.

Learn the various paid advertisement strategies that can be employed

- Multiple opportunities exist to invest real dollars into paid advertisements on Facebook. A business can promote posts, create a sponsored story, or acquire page likes. <https://www.facebook.com/about/ads/>.
- Page likes can convert fans into customers. It's the first step in the buying process. A business page needs likes and then and only then can a business place product and service offers in front of fans, or potential customers. Research to date has found a positive relationship between page likes and paid advertisement (Barnes and Coatney, 2013).
- Not all the marketing budget should be aimed at gathering more likes. Because so much information floods the newsfeed within Facebook, often business owners may want to target fans instead of non-fans. Some paid advertisement may help bypass the crowded newsfeed problem.

Top Ten Engagement Commandments

THOU SHALT post more open-ended questions, not statements. This creates a window for dialogue with potential customers.

THOU SHALT post good product/service photographs. A picture is worth a 1,000 words. A picture can also be worth 1,000 likes!

THOU SHALT post more videos. People love video content so give them what they want. Always preview video content before posting.

THOU SHALT post when thou hast time. 70% of post engagement takes place in the first hour after a post is made. So, post when you have time to engage with potential customers.

THOU SHALT post during an optimal time based on Facebook Insights data. Study your page's data and learn the best time to post.

THOU SHALT post using good grammar, not slang. Be professional.

THOU SHALT not post personal pictures on your business page unless they are appropriate and will not damage your online business brand(s). Family managed businesses may do this from time to time. Use personal timelines for personal pictures otherwise. People opted to like the page and receive information about the page. Sharing personal information on business pages can cause people to unlike a page.

THOU SHALT post positive things about your work day. Nobody wants to hear you complain about how hard you work. Tell a positive story about how you solved a problem for a customer. Keep the negative comments off the page.

THOU SHALT post often. Be social. Post. Engage. Be active. A good minimum rule of thumb is 2 to 3 times per week.

THOU SHALT continue to learn how to manage your Facebook page. Learning never stops. Study your Facebook Insights data. The more you learn about your followers, the more likely you will be able to connect with them. And that bodes well for transforming likes into actual sales.

Business Start-up Tips

Practice sharing content personally before launching a business page

- Get familiar with posting photographs and engaging with people through liking and commenting on status updates, tagging friends in photographs and learning to be positive toward all people. If done correctly, a good reputation can be established. Start by creating a personal account.

Establish a personal friend network of actual friends

- Develop a solid platform of actual friends so that when you debut your business page, they will be more likely to share it with their friends. Do not “friend” people just to be gaining friends. Stick to the real network. Over time, you can branch out. A good personal network is invaluable when launching a Facebook business.

Follow Big Brand Pages and Learn as Much as You Can

- It’s about brand management. Learn from the best. Brand pages such as Nike and Coca-Cola can be great resources for learning about how to use good photographs, how to launch new products, and how to keep with a consistent logo throughout the entire Facebook site. Learn from the best and copy what they do well.

Make Sure Your Business Has a Great Logo

- Online brand management requires that businesses have a great logo. A logo makes a first impression upon customers.
- If you don’t have a logo, get one. Do this before you launch your page, too. You can use services such as www.fiverr.com to outsource for logo design. Look at the highest rated designers on Fiverr to get started. Also, get feedback from friends and family about the logo design chosen. Make sure it represents the business.

Develop Your Facebook Page, but Don’t Launch It Just Yet

- Learn every aspect about your page including how to manage privacy, all the settings that control who posts, who sees posts, and more. Learning these things is similar to learning where everything is in a real, brick and mortar storefront. Would a business open its doors and not know how to turn on the lights? Absolutely not.
- Make sure you also have plenty of good product pictures and be ready to upload them when you launch your page. Use a local photographer if you can. Or, outsource to websites such as www.dreamstime.com or www.istockphoto.com. Get great pictures. A great picture can be worth a 1,000 likes! Make sure you read the copyright rules that apply to the pictures purchased.



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION SERVICE



Business Start-up Tips

Don't drink the "running a Facebook business page is free" Kool-Aid

- It's not free because labor time is not free. This is really marketing. Marketing requires resources, and in this case, a business owner's time.
- If a business owner can't set aside 3-5 hours per week to create posts, engage with customers and upload content, then hire someone. Either way, running a Facebook page is not free, if done right.

Make Sure Your Page allows for Mobile Check-ins

- In page settings, an option exists to allow people to check-in at the business location. Do this for two reasons. First, the business owner can use check-ins as a non-intrusive engagement strategy to promote his/her page. Each day, simply check-in when you arrive at work. People respect people who work. That is the message sent, and unlike other information floating about, this message doesn't intrude or annoy.
- Mix it up, too. You can check-in and share a picture or announce a promotion sometimes as well. This creates a diverse stream of information for your potential customers.
- Customers can check-in, too. A business can offer check-in promotions. Check-in promotions drive shares, likes, and engagement overall which is good for business.

Launch Your Facebook Business Page

- Create an event on your personal account to notify your network that you will be launching your Facebook business page.
- Remember, after 25 likes you can then customize your web address to reflect your business name.
- After 30 likes, you will have access to your page's Facebook Insights data which will reveal better times and ways of interacting with your potential customers.

About the Author

James Barnes, Assistant Extension Professor, Mississippi State University

Dr. James Barnes joined the Department of Agricultural Economics at Mississippi State University after serving for seven years as an Extension economist with the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center and Director of the Louisiana Center for Rural Initiatives. Dr. Barnes' Extension and research work focuses on the economics and management of social media in business, broadband technology adoption in rural places, rural health care, and regional economic development. Since joining MSU, Dr. Barnes has launched the **Mississippi Bricks to Clicks Entrepreneurship Extension Program** aimed at helping business owners understand how to leverage a Facebook network for business profits

Resources

- <http://www.statisticbrain.com/facebook-statistics/>
- <http://allfacebook.com/>
- <http://gold.insidenetwork.com/facebook-marketing-bible/>
- <http://www.insidefacebook.com/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/insidefacebook>
- https://www.facebook.com/allfacebook?hc_location=stream
- <http://investor.fb.com/releasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=780093>
- <http://whatisedgerank.com/>



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION SERVICE

