

HOW IT COMPANIES CAN LEVERAGE FACEBOOK TO GROW SALES



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INTRODUCTION

“WE DON’T HAVE A CHOICE ON WHETHER WE DO SOCIAL MEDIA, THE QUESTION IS HOW WELL WE DO IT.”

— ERIK QUALMAN

Every VAR or MSP is on Facebook to try and drive more business, whether directly or indirectly. The catch here is that Facebook doesn't always drive direct sales, in fact, it's a pretty rare thing to be able to tie a sale in the IT vertical directly to social. That being said, it's important to determine what the business goals are with social as opposed to direct sales. A small repair shop that is focused on local business only may have an approach to Facebook that is focused specifically on generating calls or urgent leads (i.e. network is down and they don't have an IT firm they typically work with). On the other side, a mid to enterprise size VAR or MSP is typically more focused on driving traffic to landing pages where they can convert visitors into leads for their sales force.

This guide is primarily helpful for VARs or MSPs looking to drive additional web traffic that converts into sales leads. The tactics discussed will ultimately help you leverage Facebook as a lead source. While we cannot look at Facebook as a single source of revenue, it can become a powerful lead generator when used in an integrated marketing strategy.

PART 1:

BUILD AN AUDIENCE

BUILD AN AUDIENCE

To grow your Facebook fan base, you need to make your Page and your posts as discoverable as possible both online and off. No one can connect with you on Facebook if they don't know you exist, so let's talk about 5 ways to get noticed.

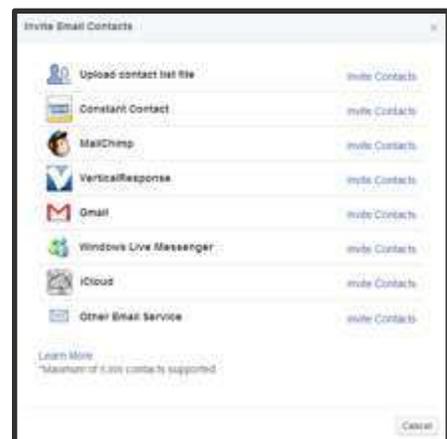
1) FILL OUT ALL SEARCHABLE INFORMATION ON BUSINESS PAGE

If you don't already have one, create a Facebook Page for your business. Add basic information that will help people understand your business better—an overview of what you offer, photos of your products and links to blog posts or endorsements of your products. **Be sure to link to your website in the About** section. It's critical that you also add at least one page category so your business will turn up in relevant search results.

2) INVITE EXISTING CONTACTS TO LIKE YOUR PAGE

Start with who you already know. Odds are you already have customers, friends, and family who are already in your corner supporting you on. Encourage them to channel that support into positive reviews and interactions on your Facebook Page. You can do this by directly inviting your relevant Facebook friends to like your Page, or uploading your list of best customers so you can send them an email about it (all of which can be done from the "Build Audience" section). These are the people who will build the initial foundation and set the tone of conversation on your Page.

You can do this in 3 ways: invite your personal Facebook friends to like the page, by directly inviting your relevant Facebook friends to like your Page, or uploading your list of best customers so you can send them an email about it (all of which can be done from the "Build Audience" section). These are the people who will build the initial foundation and set the tone of conversation on your Page.





BUILD AN AUDIENCE

3) INCORPORATE FB INTO ONLINE & OFFLINE COMMUNICATIONS

Integrate your FB presence with your online and offline storefronts. If you have a brick & mortar location, Promote your Page in store. Foot traffic comes through your door daily. It is probably a mix of loyal customers and curious first time customers. Simply letting those first-timers know you're on Facebook can help turn them into long-term, recurring customers. Place stickers on your door promoting your Page, print a link to your Page on receipts, and/or offer a discount at the register for customers who "like" your Page on the spot!

If you have a website, blog, or email newsletter, make sure you are giving customers (new and old) a way to engage with and share your content back to Facebook by using Facebook login, Facebook plugins, or providing a link to your Page

Check out all of Facebook's various social plugins you can incorporate into your website or blog to get your visitors to become fans. <https://developers.facebook.com/docs/plugins/>

4) CREATE VALUE

Always ask yourself – why should anyone else care? If you're constantly talking about yourself, chances are you're not creating value. Creating value really comes into play with the content you create and share with your fans and how you interact with them (more on that later). If you're in tune with your buyer personas, you'll have a good idea what types of content to publish. If not, or if you just need some inspiration, consider spending a week taking note of anything in your own News Feed that compels you click, comment, or share. What inspired you? Use your observations to inform future posts.

5 WAYS TO GET NOTICED

5) LEVERAGE FACEBOOK ADS

We'll do a deeper dive on Facebook Ads, and how it's quite possibly the best value in paid advertising, later on in this guide. As it relates to building an audience, Facebook Ads can be used to target individuals to "like" and follow your page. This is a way to quickly scale your audience, and ensure it's the right followers.

Facebook Ads allow you to target your ads based off a large amount of data fields that were provided by the individual themselves. The power here is that it's done on an individual basis, as opposed to a large group. If you think of a television ad aired on ESPN, they are likely targeting a specific demographic that would usually watch ESPN at that time. With Facebook Ads, you are targeting the individuals who stated they either have a certain occupation, are a certain age, or have certain interests that they follow and engage with.

The ability to get to this level of targeting is unheard of, and will grow in price once larger brands start leveraging at the same scale they do with traditional direct marketing.





PART 2:
CONTENT STRATEGY

CONTENT STRATEGY

WHAT PROBLEM DO YOU SOLVE?

B2B firms, specifically in the technology sector, are using social media to successfully generate leads that result in revenue. Where most companies get stuck is in the content they are sharing. A good rule of thumb is to make sure that every piece of content you create solves a specific problem for your target persona.

TYPES OF CONTENT THAT GENERATE LEADS



**EBOOKS, WHITEPAPERS
& GUIDES**



TEMPLATES



CHECKLISTS



BLOG POSTS



WEBINARS



**CONTENT CREATION
ASSETS**

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLBOX

With a resource library full of content items such as the above, your social media strategy has the tools it needs to generate inbound leads for your sales team.

CONTENT STRATEGY

EXAMPLE

HubSpot creates Page posts that hone in on a specific point from a longer piece of content, or gives their audience an idea of what they'll learn from it.

Most times this means creating custom images in PowerPoint or Photoshop so we can catch a prospect's eye when they're perusing their News Feed.

The image shows a screenshot of a social media post from HubSpot. At the top left is the HubSpot logo and the text "HubSpot 15 hours ago". Below this is a text-based post: "Don't quit after you close. Learn how to delight your customers and keep them happy for years to come: <http://hub.am/18xgGp>". The main visual is a large, colorful graphic with a black top section containing the text "[Free guide + infographic]: HOW TO CREATE TRUE SOCIAL MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS". Below this is a yellow section featuring a tilted image of a guide titled "THE SOCIAL PART OF SOCIAL MEDIA: A LOVE STORY" which includes a heart icon and the text "Identifying Social's Value at Each Marketing Stage". To the right of the tilted image, it says "This love story will teach you how to:" followed by a list: "Attract", "Promote", "Personalize", and "Discover". At the bottom of the graphic, it reads "Attract. Convert. Close. DELIGHT." and the HubSpot logo. The bottom of the post shows "Like · Comment · Share" and a notification icon with the number "13".

CONTENT STRATEGY

A PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

Facebook posts are the digital breadcrumbs that draw an audience down a trail toward a much more substantial piece of content they can download after filling out a form.

Facebook is used to drive traffic to landing pages where visitors convert into leads.



CONTENT STRATEGY

AVOIDING SALES DRIVEN CONTENT

To attract leads, you can't post only sales driven content. Let's use a pop-culture example to explain why:

Companies who only talk about what they sell sound like this:



**HEY EVERYONE!
COME AND SEE HOW
GOOD I LOOK!**

Instead, generate content in two ways:



DIRECTLY

AND



INDIRECTLY

Generate leads by sharing content that links directly back to a landing page with a contact form on your website.

Generate leads eventually after sharing friendly, easy-to-consume content not housed behind a form.

CONTENT STRATEGY

KEYS TO SOCIAL LEAD GENERATION

The key to generating leads on Facebook is to post a variety of content that aligns with goals other than generating leads or driving sales.



Aiming for “fluffier” goals like reach, awareness, buzz, customer satisfaction, and engagement (comments, likes, shares) are just as important as rigid lead gen or sales goals. They’re the stepping stones to what you really want: more business.

In fact, it’s vital to aim first to get your audience to interact with your posts. That’s why a balance of direct and indirect lead gen content is so important. Without eyeballs, you can’t get clicks, which means you can’t get traffic, leads, or customers!

CONTENT STRATEGY

ENGAGEMENT GOALS

Although the ultimate goal on Facebook is to generate leads that become customers, there needs to be engagement goals for each post published, and those goals vary. Sometimes you want to encourage comments because you want feedback. Other times, you may strive to for a high volume of shares because you want a particular message to spread as far and wide as possible

The point is, by striving for comments, likes, and shares, you garner more visibility in the Facebook News Feed, which ultimately increases our chances for click through (traffic) and conversions (generated leads). You need leads to get customers.



More likes, comments, and shares means ...

... More chances for clicks and contacts (leads).



PART 3:
FACEBOOK ADS

FACEBOOK ADS

A NEW PAID MEDIA PLATFORM

Facebook is evolving to become more of a paid marketing platform than an organic one. A brand's ability to reach their fan base organically has diminished as more brands and content compete to appear in user's News Feeds.

At any given moment, there are approximately 1,500 News Feed stories competing against one another. Facebook's algorithm prioritizes only about 300 – one fifth – of them. The brands that want to get noticed have to pay to play.

Reach wasn't always this way, but it's been headed this way for awhile. In late 2012, the industry found out only about 16% of a Facebook page's fans would see a post from that page. In October 2013, that number dropped to about 12%, then 6% in February 2014, and as little as 2% for pages having over 500K fans. Of course, this has upset many marketers who paid for ads to grow their fan base, thinking they'd be able to broadcast to those fans for free.

FACEBOOK ADS

A NEW PAID MEDIA PLATFORM (CONT.)

But the reality is that Facebook is a business just like yours, and the company encourages marketers to look at their fan bases as a way to make paid advertising more effective rather than a free broadcast channel, and that you should assume organic reach will eventually arrive at zero. If you really want to reach your target audience on Facebook, you'll need to supplement your organic efforts with some paid advertising.

Facebook has taken the position that fans should mainly be looked at as a way to make paid advertising more effective, as opposed to a free distribution channel. "Increasingly Facebook is saying that you should assume a day will come when the organic reach is zero."

TYPES OF ADS

There are countless ways to leverage Facebook ads, however, below are the typical ways Facebook ads are implemented through their ad manager tool:

- Page Likes
- Post Boost
- Landing Page Conversions
- Drive Traffic to Event
- App Installs
- Clicks to Website
- Offer Claim
- Video Views
- Drive Traffic to Store
- App Engagement

CONCLUSION

IT VARs & MSPs must be prepared with a solid social media strategy. Like it or not, social media is a factor in today's buying process. For firms who choose not to play in this space, outsiders are creating their own message and sharing it with you having no say. At the same time, social can have a massive impact in regards to leads generated. Always remember the following:

- Focus on helping people. B2B is still P2P – person to person.
- Create content that makes your target audience's job easier.

Then, create interesting posts to promote that content on Facebook.

- Post a balance of direct and indirect lead gen content.
- Have an engagement goal for each post.
- Tell your audience what to do by including a clear call-to-action in your posts.

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