

Create a Loyal Following with a Facebook Group for Your Business



Beginning marketers often think a Facebook group is an ideal way to bring their target market together. And while we're not discounting the truth behind that, most novice businesses make a critical mistake when creating a Facebook group for the first time.

Their mistake negatively impacts their ability to engage their target market. And it's such a common mistake that it needs to be addressed before we give you suggestions on engaging your market through this medium.

Most businesses that start a Facebook community place their business at the center of the community. And why not? That's the point, right? You want more business so it should be about you.

Yes?

No.

Your business should not be the crux of the community. Your target audience's interests (that you cater to) should be. By building a community around a shared interest relevant to your target market, you can boost engagement, gather valuable insights, and ultimately drive sales.

But how? If it's not about your business? Let's explore how this works with a few examples.

Beyond the Product or Service: Creating Connection

Here's how some businesses might create engaging Facebook groups around a common interest.

1. A bookstore could spend its time promoting its new releases and sales on its social media channels. Or it could create a group for local readers to discuss favorite books, share recommendations, and participate in virtual book clubs. This is an easy way to identify people in the area who enjoy reading. The bookstore can still promote its sales and new books but it's doing so to an interested audience, while also helping them to connect to one another. This sort of connection keeps them invested in the group in a way that boring self-promotion does not.

2. A yoga studio or gym could go beyond class schedules by forming a group so members could discuss yoga poses, share wellness tips, healthy eating plans, and support.

3. A craft brewery or winery could tap into the local beverage scene to become a hub for beer (wine or spirits) enthusiasts to share reviews, discuss brewing or fermentation techniques, and stay updated on the business' latest offerings. They can also discuss wine pairings and other complementary topics.

4. A children's clothing boutique may create a "bad moms" or "bad parents" online hangout where they can share parenting tips, hacks, and commiseration for some of the most trying and rewarding times in one's life.

Now that you have a few ideas on the kind of group you could create around your business and your primary market's needs, let's talk about how to start your Facebook group.

How to Build an Engaging Facebook Group

1. Identify your market. What interests or passions unite your target customers? Choose a topic that genuinely excites them.
2. Find an angle that is appealing to that market. It should be in keeping with your brand's tone.
3. Write a compelling description where you clearly explain the group's purpose, guidelines, and the benefits of joining. The last one is the most important. What will they get from being a member. Why should they join?

4. Roll out the welcome mat by creating a warm, welcoming environment. Consider a "Welcome Thread" or pinned post with essential information. Some groups ask questions of those who want to join.
5. Post regularly and consistently. Share relevant articles, polls, questions, and thought-provoking discussions. At some point, the group will hit "critical mass" and a lot of the conversation will go on around you. But in the beginning, you will need to seed it and keep the conversations going. Recruit loyal customers and staff to help.
6. Promote your group on all platforms—your website, email newsletters, and other social media channels. If you have a brick-and-mortar business tell shoppers. Add the link to your email signature.
7. Offer exclusive perks. Host special events, early previews or access, Q&A sessions, flash sales, or contests exclusively for group members.
8. Spark interaction by responding to comments promptly, acknowledging contributions, and highlighting active members. Welcome new members. Share exciting information like member growth.
9. Moderate posts and maintain a positive and respectful environment. Address any conflicts or inappropriate behavior swiftly. Communicate courtesy expectations.
10. Post photos, videos, and infographics. Behind the scenes images and videos as well as blooper reels can be very engaging.
11. Monitor group insights to understand what type of content resonates most with your audience and understand best times to post.
12. Host live Q&A sessions with experts, special guests, or influencers in your field. Additionally feature local businesses your audience would be interested in. If you're a bookstore, for instance, highlight someone who makes special gifts for readers and literary merchandise. If you do that, you can also...
13. Collaborate with complementary businesses to offer joint promotions and exclusive deals to group members.
14. Create challenges or contests to encourage participation and foster friendly competition.
15. Ask questions that will get people talking.

What Does a Thriving Facebook Group Do for Business?

There are several benefits to hosting a Facebook group including:

- Enhanced brand visibility and stronger customer relationships.

- Invaluable feedback and insights into your target market's preferences. Instead of listening on social media, you're hosting the platform where your ideal market is talking and sharing their insights. Use those insights to create...
- A platform for launching new products or services and generating buzz
- A loyal community of brand advocates and potential customers

Sound good? You can start a Facebook group today if you're clear on what your audience wants. But remember, it takes time and dedication to foster an engaged community. Be patient, consistent, and most importantly, make it enjoyable for everyone involved. After all, it's about them, not you.

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