



How to Use Your Facebook Profile for Business & Social Networking

I have always used Facebook for business networking as well as socialising, but many people use it solely as a social tool and wouldn't dare open up their profiles, and their embarrassing holiday photos, for all to see! However, Facebook does allow us to interact with people that may not use other business networking sites and new features make it easier to control who sees what. I have built a number of good business relationships on Facebook, so, if you are ready to tap into a new pool of potential clients, read on.

1. Create an interesting profile

- Create a professional profile with a suitable photo. Facebook is a 'social' network, so a warm smile will work wonders and you will appear both friendly and approachable.
- Include something of interest, but take care with personal details such as birthdays.
- Include links to your website, or blog (if you have one), and any other social media sites you may be using

2. Build your network

- Facebook is about social networking and keeping in touch with people. Invite business contacts and friends from your email programmes, or if you prefer, by using the search facility.
- Another way to expand your network is by checking Facebook's 'friend suggestions', although beware, they can be a little random!
- You can also look at your friends' contacts to see who you know and can invite to connect with you.
- When out networking, ask people you meet whether they use Facebook or other social media and then connect with them after the meeting- easy!
- Don't be offended if people don't wish to connect with you. Some people see Facebook purely as a social platform where they can have fun interacting with friends and get away from work.

3. Manage your contacts

- Whether you are using Facebook for personal and/ or business use, try to familiarise yourself with the privacy settings which can be adjusted for different groups of people.
- Go into Settings then click on >Privacy> manage>Profile information> Posts by me>customise. Here you can create different contact lists for any of your posts and photo albums . This may prevent your personal friends being inundated with irrelevant business information, and vice versa.

4. Get to know people

- Read your friends' profiles & wall posts to learn more about them. You will also understand the different uses of Facebook better.
- Do comment on your 'friend's' updates- be social but professional.
- Click on 'like' button, to show that you have seen and liked or benefited from a post.

5. Be clear about how you wish to be seen

Always consider what posts and activities are good for your brand, as your 'friends' can see how you interact on Facebook. Whilst they may like you, they may also wonder whether you haven't got anything better to do when they see you playing games or quizzes. Updates that include your latest Farmville news may not necessarily encourage people to trust you in business.

6. Post updates and events of interest

- If you think that your business is not directly of interest to people, remember that Facebook is about building relationships. Don't keep broadcasting one promotion after another.
- Get to know people, post an interesting news item that you've come across, or click 'share' next to somebody' else's post that you like. This will post their item to your 'wall' for other people to see.
- Sometimes you may see a friend's updates that you don't enjoy reading, or may even find irritating. Simply click 'hide' next to one their updates. They won't know that you can't see their updates on your home page any more. When I hide someone, I also 'unhide' them again a couple of weeks later just to see if they change their posts. Do bear in mind also that occasionally people take a while to understand online networking etiquette!
- Use 'Notes' to post blog-style posts- this area is a useful starter if you don't yet have your own blog. You can activate this facility along with others like photo albums by clicking on the 'settings' tab.

7. Create a business or group page for your business

It is often advisable to have a separate space for your business. This is a good way to promote your services or products whether you are a one-woman band or run a slightly bigger business! If, however, you also want to reap the benefits of connecting informally with business contacts online, then you will still want to maintain your main profile; in which case, I hope you find the above tips useful.



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