



# Become a Fan

**A Guide to Effective Corporate Facebooking**

**The White Paper**

by Austin Scott

**The way we communicate will forever be shaped by the tools of our society.**

It's now vital that companies join in the conversation, meeting clients where they are.

Traditional one-way advertising has been forced to make room for two-way conversation as tools such as social media have given the consumer a voice.

The following is a guide to help you effectively use one of the fastest growing corporate communication mediums, the Facebook fan page.

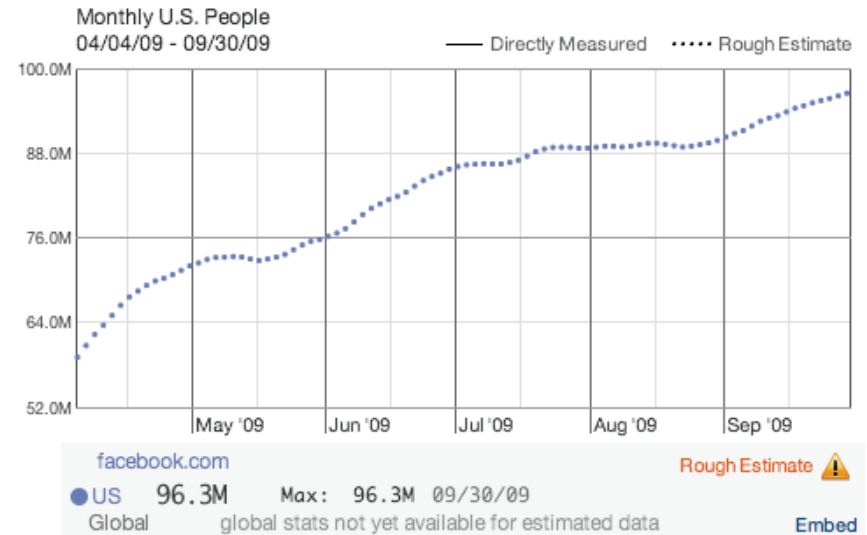
## Does your company need a fan page?

**Are your consumers on Facebook?** This is the first and most logical question a company should ask before diving into social media. Connecting with customers on their chosen platform is extremely important. If your demographic is already on Facebook then it may be a good idea for you to meet them there. If you're not sure whether they are or not then it's time to do some research. With more than 350 million users there's a good chance all or part of your customer base is logging on. While Facebook started as a way to connect college students, more than half of its users are now non-college members, and its fastest growing user base is adults 35 years and older. If you market products or services internationally Facebook has already been translated into 70 different languages and about 70% of Facebook users are outside the United States.

**A natural extension of your business.** Now that you have some reasonable certainty that your customers are on Facebook, does your product or service fit the platform. Facebook is a social network and is a natural fit for products that are naturally social. Does your bar have karaoke Wednesdays or do the readers of your travel magazine love to share their stories. If your company already brings people together, then a fan page should be an easy fit. If you cannot find a natural social connection, it's possible that your product simply has a passionate following. Facebook won't create this type of following if it doesn't already exist, but if your users want to talk about what you do or what you make then they may have already started their own groups online. Your company should be represented in an official capacity whether you start an official fan page or merely give your stamp of approval to your fans that have started one on your behalf and are doing a good job.

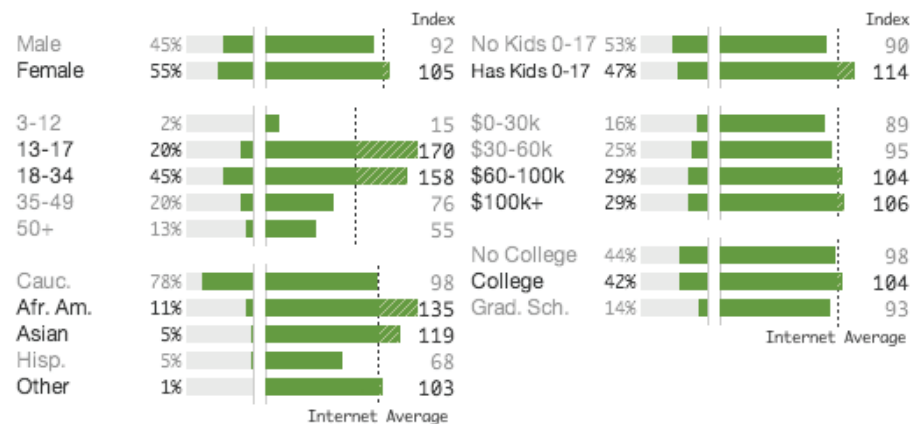
**To recap** if your product or service already functions in a social manner then a fan page is a natural extension. Secondly if you already have a

passionate following and they are already on Facebook, meet them there. You can't force your consumer base to join your fan page, but if they're already on Facebook, give them a chance to join your party.



### US Demographics

Updated 11/2009 • Next: 12/2009



Income represents total household income.  
100 index is internet average.

Statistics courtesy of quantcast.com

# Further breakdown of demographics

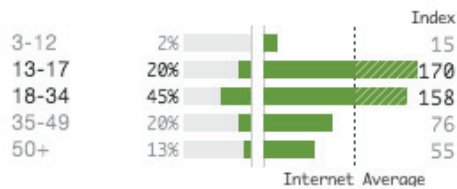
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## Female

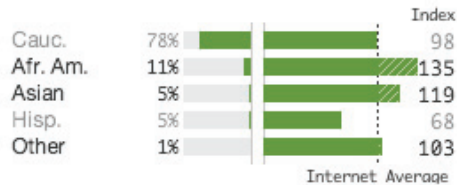


## Teens

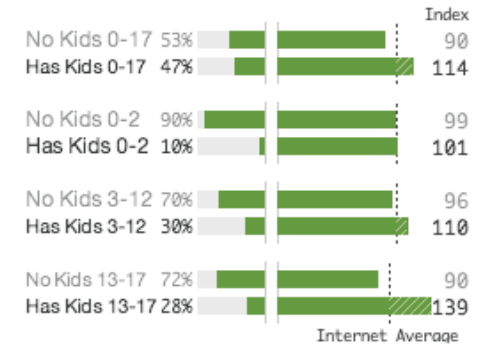


## African American

There are more African American visitors here than average.



## Has Kids 13-17 In Household

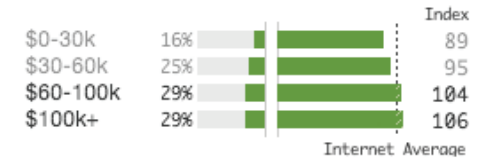


Children in Household



## More Affluent

This site attracts a more affluent audience.

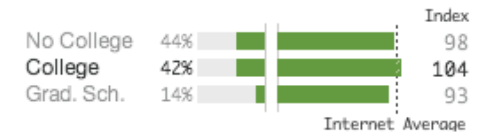


Household Income



## College Graduates

There is a high index of College Graduates here.



## Why is Facebook useful?

**Interaction.** The way we advertise is and will continue to change. It's no longer about interruptive advertising but interactive. Join the conversation where there at and provide something of value for their time. If your customer base is already on Facebook, they are more likely to stop by your fan page when they see relevant useful information than click on your banner ad or check your web site.

**Disseminate relevant information.** Facebook's ability to disseminate information to a willing customer base that has opted in to your message by becoming a fan is extremely valuable. The timeliness of the information you send is also a great strength of building a network of fans. With 50% of users logging on to Facebook at least once each day you have the ability to push out relevant and time sensitive information such as one-day sales promotions and specials. Something that wouldn't work in many traditional weekly or monthly print mediums.

**Crowd sourcing.** Another use is as a platform for building community. While each Facebook profile is a personal window, a fan page is a community of individuals who can all share in their common interest. Building this conversation with your fans also gives opportunity for crowd sourcing of ideas and possible improvements to help strengthen your product or service. It's easy to give your customers what they want when they tell you what they want.

**Track following.** Finally, a fan page can serve as a source of metrics for tracking your popularity. While this may not be an accurate measurement it can reveal some information especially if your group blows up.

**To recap** a fan page can be useful for a few reasons. One being a way to disseminate relevant information to a group of willing customers who have already opted into your message. Two it serves as a platform

for building community around your business. Three it can be used for crowd sourcing ideas and help make your business stronger. And lastly, four, to simply track your popularity on Facebook.

## How do you effectively use your fan page?

**Build a following.** A misconception is that users will somehow search out and find your fan page simply because you created it. Linking your current brand's web site and other social media outlets to your Facebook fan page will help funnel users to your page. Facebook provides a nice widget called Fan box which allows companies to add a "Become a Fan" button on their site outside of Facebook. Unlike a personal page, fan pages cannot friend other users. You can invite fans by sending a short message. Let users know that you have something to offer them and be sure to include a link to your page. They will always wonder what's in it for them. Offering incentives is another effective method of building a following. Companies can make special offers specifically to fans such as coupons, gifts or limited time offers.

**Provide rich content.** Users will come to your page in search of information and community. Your fan page should be rich with pertinent information, serving as a mirror to your brand's web site. By providing them some of the valuable information they would have to travel to your web site to get, you make their lives easier. Branding your page as a leading resource for information in your category will also assist in targeting a new demographic of users who aren't familiar with your brand or product.

**Create community around your brand.** Smart companies use Facebook to create dialogue with their consumers. By encouraging discussion among fans you now have the opportunity to control the voice of your

brand and gain valuable feedback. Crowd sourcing is an invaluable tool in creating products your consumers love. Fan pages allow you to directly ask your consumers, "What could we improve about our product." This not only puts you on the right track but gives users a sense of ownership in the brand and its potential success.

**Track your efforts.** While tracking the return on investment of your Facebook page is not an exact science it is a strong branding tool. Track your analytics and look for an increase in referrals to your web site from Facebook. Your analytics will also provide you feedback about the types of conversations and content you are promoting. As user interaction increases or decreases you should be able to better focus your message.

**To recap** there are a few points to be made in most effectively utilizing your page. You must first gather a following which can be done through simple message invites, funneling of users from your other online outlets with the use of promotions, links or the fan box widget. Provide your fans pertinent information that adds value to the page. Join in the conversation and create dialogue with your consumers as a means of establishing a voice for your brand or crowd sourcing and finally track your analytics as a means of gauging the effectiveness of your efforts and focusing your message.

## Best practices

**Define a publishing schedule.** If your page sits dormant your fans will quickly take notice and either defriend you or worse spread the word that you are unengaged as a brand. An easy way to keep this from happening is by creating a week by week publishing schedule for keeping your content fresh. This includes, post, status updates, notes, photo and video updates. This schedule will also cover moderation of comments from fans in order to best respond. If a question is left

unanswered in the world of social media, you can be sure complaints will follow shortly after.

**Keep it fresh.** While keeping your content fresh is important, you need to make sure not to become too obtrusive. Spamming your fans with updates every minute will flood their wall and you risk them defriending you to stop the noise. Posting updates a few times a week is a good rule of thumb for staying relevant without annoying your fans.

**Variable content.** Displaying different content for fans and non-fans is a smart way to drive visitors to information they may be seeking or promote a call to action. When non-fans visit your page give them an easy call to action to become a fan of the page while other fans may be sent to the wall tab to see your latest updates.

**Contests** have quickly become a popular method of generating participation on fan pages. By offering exclusive contests and prizes to Facebook users, you can gain more fans and increase traffic. Inviting users to participate in photo or video competitions that will be posted to your page are great for generating user interaction.

**Synchronization** with Twitter is great for busy brands. This allows you to push status updates to both your Twitter and Facebook pages. Be aware though that while you may update your twitter many times throughout the day, this is not advisable for your Facebook page as mentioned previously.

**To recap** you should be aware of a few best practices for maintaining your fan page. First define a publishing schedule to ensure your content is fresh and your fans are being engaged. Display different content for fans and non-fans as a means of steering them to the most relevant content or call to action. Contest can help encourage participation from your fans and finally synchronization with other social networking

platforms such as Twitter will ensure your message is spread across all outlets and saves you time.

## Fan page case studies

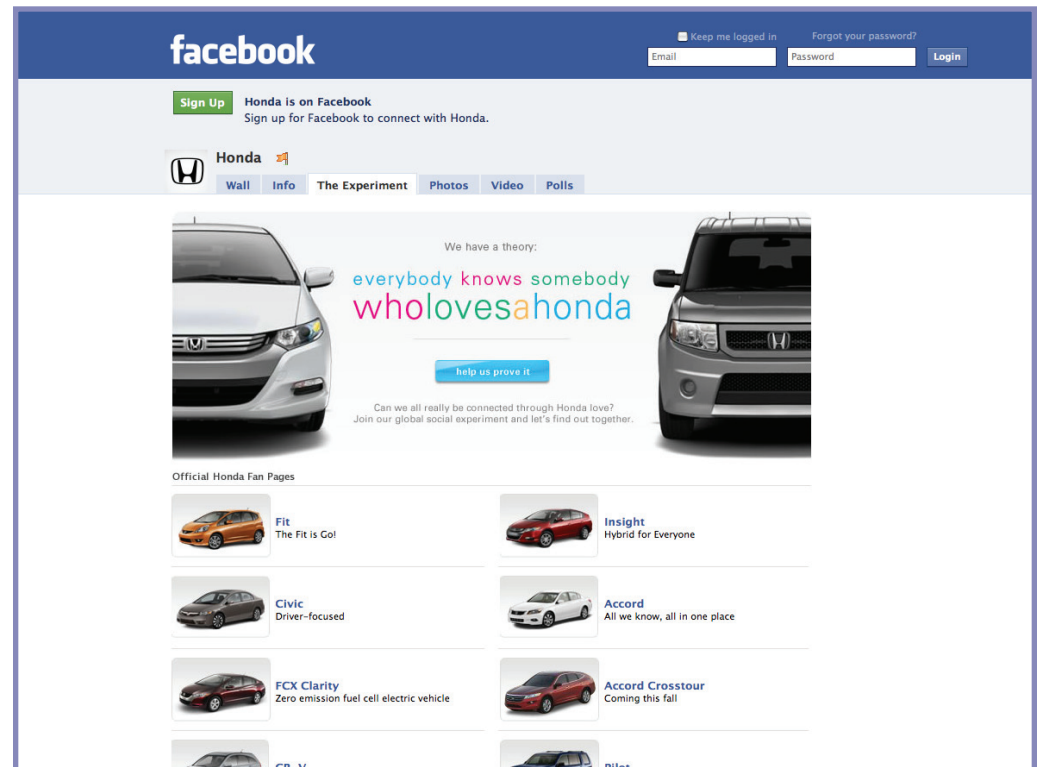
The following pages are examples of companies who have found interesting and successful ways of leveraging their Fan pages to achieve a variety of communications goals.

# Honda

www.Facebook.com/honda

## Building Community

The Honda experiment uses the passion of its consumers to build a sense of community around the brand with its campaign “everybody knows somebody who loves a Honda.” Research has increasingly shown that consumers are far more likely to trust peer recommendations over advertising when making a purchasing decision. Honda has leveraged that research by connecting current owners with potential consumers.



# Pizza Hut

www.Facebook.com/pizzahut

## Instant Access

The Pizza Hut order application is a Facebook application that allows users to order pizza without ever leaving the site. The app has generated a profit for Pizza Hut because the company understands the importance of meeting their customers where they are and giving customers a way to save time.



# Sears

www.Facebook.com/sears

## Call to Action

Facebook allows companies to set default entry pages for fans and non-fans. Sears uses this ability with a strong call to action. When non-fans enter the page they are greeted by sign asking them to become a fan. Sears also understands that users will always ask “what’s in it for me.” Sears offers special discounts to their fans and provides value for becoming a fan.



# Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream

www.Facebook.com/benjerry

## Fun Application

The "Flip My Text" application from Ben and Jerry's ice cream is a great use of a Facebook application to promote their flipped out ice cream line. The application allows users to write Facebook messages that are flipped upside down. When someone receives a flipped message from a friend the recipient is intrigued to figure out how this was done, and their search for an answer leads them back to the Ben and Jerry fan page.



# Barack Obama

www.Facebook.com/barackobama

## Discussion

The real power of Facebook is the ability to create dialogue with your consumers or in the case of President Obama, supporters. Barack Obama successfully used his Fan page as a forum for discussion on a variety of topics. By hosting the conversation, Obama's followers feel they have a voice and more direct line to the President. This was a large component of his presidential campaign.



The screenshot shows the Facebook interface for the 'Barack Obama is on Facebook' page. The top navigation bar includes the Facebook logo, a 'Keep me logged in' checkbox, a 'Forgot your password?' link, and a 'Login' button. Below the navigation bar, there is a 'Sign Up' button and a message: 'Barack Obama is on Facebook. Sign up for Facebook to connect with Barack Obama.' The main content area features a profile picture of Barack Obama and navigation tabs for 'Wall', 'Info', 'Events', 'Notes', 'Discussions', and 'Photos'. The 'Discussions' tab is active, displaying a list of topics. Each topic includes a title, the number of posts, the number of people who created the topic, the creation date and time, and the name of the latest poster along with the time since they posted. The topics listed are:

- didn't know there were so many teabagging racists in America**: 62 posts by 9 people, Created on November 8, 2009 at 6:28pm. Latest post by Anton, Posted 40 seconds ago.
- U.F.O. REVELATION ON 11/26 PRESS CONFERENCE?**: 10 posts by 3 people, Created on November 10, 2009 at 12:51am. Latest post by Nicola, Posted 44 seconds ago.
- He is...that that he is!**: 13 posts by 5 people, Created 11 hours ago. Latest post by Nele, Posted about a minute ago.
- GIVE OBAMA A BREAK... To you guys that supported BUSH who destroyed this Country in 8 years**: 19463 posts by 326 people, Created on August 29, 2009 at 1:11pm. Latest post by Nele, Posted 5 minutes ago.
- Only a sith deals in Absolute...**: 2 posts by 2 people, Created 52 minutes ago. Latest post by Michele, Posted 20 minutes ago.
- FUCK YOU OBAMA!!!**: 1269 posts by 214 people, Created on August 30, 2009 at 1:59pm. Latest post by Stanley, Posted 27 minutes ago.
- Protest against US base in Japan**: 276 posts by 17 people, Created on November 8, 2009 at 7:09am. Latest post by Nele, Posted 29 minutes ago.
- please read**: 3 posts by 3 people, Created 3 hours ago. Latest post by Michele, Posted 40 minutes ago.
- Barack Obama Please Stop persecuting Muslims in USA !!!**: 21 posts by 7 people, Created 5 hours ago. Latest post by Nele, Posted 42 minutes ago.
- An Answer to the Noisy Idiot Problem**: 1 post by 1 person, Created 47 minutes ago. Latest post by Craig, Posted 47 minutes ago.

# Red Bull

www.Facebook.com/redbull

## Integration

Red Bull energy drink uses a lot of professional athletes in its promotion. By integrating each athletes Twitter and status updates into one tab on its fan page, users have a single location to keep a pulse on what their favorite Red Bull athletes are doing. The integration of other social media tools such as Twitter will just make your page that more powerful.



## About the Author

**Austin Scott** is an interactive art director and M.F.A. student in Advertising Design at the Savannah College of Art and Design. Learn more by visiting his portfolio site at [www.austinscottdesign.com](http://www.austinscottdesign.com) or check out his blog on future advertising trends at [www.futuristicAdvertising.com](http://www.futuristicAdvertising.com).

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