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Takeaways for Developing your
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Strategy

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// Takeaways for Developing your FB Strategy

Facebook. It's not just a fun place for people to connect with friends and family online. It's a great place for businesses to form relationships and engage with consumers to get more business.

Did you know:

- 93% of adult Internet users are on Facebook
- One out of every 8 minutes online is spent on Facebook
- The average Facebook user spends more than 11 hours per month on Facebook

It's not news that Facebook is taking the world by storm. But it is important for businesses to understand this world-wide social networking phenomenon.

A [recent Web survey](#) says that 77% of small business owners plan to devote more time and money to social media as part of the marketing strategy in 2011 than they did in 2010. Interestingly, though, almost 60% said that social marketing doesn't meet or only partially meets their expectations.

What does this tell us?

A lot of small business owners either aren't devoting enough time or resources to social media, or they aren't updating their pages enough, or they aren't including the right kind of content. More than 36% who do use Facebook only update or post new content once a week or less! Although they clearly want to be, many business owners just aren't [using Facebook effectively](#).

By understanding the motivation of Facebook users, what they expect when engaging on the site, and developing a Facebook strategy to effectively reach this audience, you can more effectively connect with today's increasingly social consumer.

Instead of venturing into Facebook marketing blindly, we've put together some notes from our Small Business Seminar at the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce to help you along the way.

1. Have a Goal

Your Facebook page needs a specific and measurable goal. All too often, businesses get caught up in the hype of getting more 'fans.' Yeah, getting more Facebook fans is good, but remember: a fan is not worth anything without a goal of what to do with them. A good Facebook goal will consider how engaged your audience is and be able to measure how well you can get them to take desired actions.

2. Proper Setup

It is of vital importance that your Facebook page be set up properly as a business fan page from the get go. Too many businesses fall prey to Facebook's ever-changing rules and terms of use. In fact, more than 20,000 accounts are deactivated *everyday* for not complying with Facebook's rules!

Below are some common things you see on Facebook, but it turns out they're against Facebook's terms of use:

Collecting Visitor Information without Telling Them

Some businesses use their Facebook page as a way to gather information about fans so that they can better target ads, messages, etc. Only problem with this: it's against the rules. You are not allowed to collect data on your page visitors without telling them what you are collecting and how their information will be used.

Third Party Advertisements

Some businesses think that they can make a buck off selling advertisements that they'll share with their followers. That's a no-no.

Administering a Contest through Facebook

You see it all the time: "Post your picture on our wall and whoever gets the most likes by [specific date] will win a great prize!" Seems harmless, but Facebook tells businesses that they can't use Facebook functionality or features to run a contest. Now, that doesn't mean you can't run a contest on your Facebook page, you just need to create an app through which you administer your contest. Oh yeah. And if you think it's okay to at least announce the winner of your contest on Facebook, think again. This seemingly harmless action is—yup, you guessed it—against the rules.

Make sure your account is set up properly and properly administered to avoid falling on the wrong side of Facebook's terms of use.

3. Be Positive

One of the best ways to get people to engage with your Facebook page is to post positive statements. People are on Facebook to catch up with friends and family, to relax and to be entertained. Don't bring your audience down by talking about negative things. You definitely don't want potential clients associating those negative feelings with your business!

4. Focus on Engagement

It is important to remember that Facebook is an online channel for communicating with customers and potential customers. It is not a billboard. It is not an online flier. It is not a website for your business. It *is* a mechanism of engagement. By trying to connect and get responses from your target audience, you are building up a loyal following of consumers who will help spread the word about your business to their friends and family.

But you can't do engagement half-heartedly. When people respond to your posts or leave their own posts on your wall, they are expecting a timely response. Be sure to set aside time to respond to questions on your wall and follow up on posts. If you're not authentic, your audience will see right through you.

5. Don't Oversell

Marketing within the social media sphere is a different animal than traditional marketing. Sure, you still want brand recognition—your logo, your slogan, your voice. But marketing over social media is less about pushing a “you need me” message. Social media marketing is about drawing your client in through genuine engagement.

Think about it: you're meeting your customers where they are—checking in with friends and family, staying current on what's relevant to their lives. If you barge into their personal spaces toting your wares, you're going to get tuned out—unfollowed, unliked, disabled.

What's going to keep you in their social media circles is relevance. You have to show your customers that you're into what they're into, that you have something interesting to share. Yes, this will involve deals, discounts, special offers for your online friends and followers only, but that's not it. You can connect with your customers the way their friends do—by sharing pictures, inspirational thoughts, helpful tips, and a sense of humor. You also have to do it like their friends do—frequently enough so they know you're really there but not so often that you get annoying.

Don't make your page a never-ending sales pitch. Your audience will tune you out and it will be hard to get them to engage on your page. The 80/20 principle is a good rule to keep in mind: dedicate 80% of your Facebook page to fun and engagement and remaining 20% to selling (but even then, make it a soft sell. People aren't on Facebook to be sold to; they're on Facebook to connect).

6. Make it Fun!

It's true. Facebook is about creating a fun space for consumers to connect with you online as part of an attempt to build lasting relationships and loyal customers. But how do you make your Facebook page fun? It's important to come up with clearly defined 'personality' for your brand—and then stay true to it! Whether you're funky, conservative, edgy or homey, give people a reason to *want* to engage with your brand online.

// Some Important Dos and Don'ts for Managing your Business Facebook Page

Follow these dos and don'ts to be on the path of creating a successful Facebook page—in a way that doesn't violate those hair-splitting terms of use:

DO set up your account as a business Fan Page, not a Personal Profile. Not setting up your account properly can get you banned faster than...well, really fast.

DO occasionally run contests on your Facebook page—contests that really engage people and get them excited about your product or service. As long as you follow the rules, you'll provide your fans with a fun experience, get the word out about your company and not risk having your page banned. Note: Make the prize worth the action you're asking your fans to take. The more work required, the greater the award should be.

DON'T only talk about yourself and how great your company is. Yeah, people need to know who you are and why they should do business with you, but understand that people on Facebook are seeking to be entertained. Learn to engage with your audience in a way that lets them know who you are without turning you into "that guy" (who only talks about himself).

DO ask your fans questions. This is a great place to get feedback from your customers, and also get people talking about your business.

DON'T leave it be. You should make several posts per week in order to keep people interested. Offer advice, tips, and interesting links to blogs and videos. Come up with a posting schedule— one that doesn't post too much or too little.

DO engage your fans. When someone has a question—answer it! This might mean putting out fires every now and then, but on the whole, you'll show people how much you appreciate their interest in your business by responding to posts in a timely manner.

Of course, there are many other things to consider when administering a Facebook page for your business. But, if you're new to Facebook, this list should get you started. At SonicSEO.com, we are committed to providing our clients with the best possible experience. If you find that administering your Facebook page is too much to manage, let us know. We're happy to help you engage with your fans in a way that increases awareness of your business and deepens relationships with existing customers through our [social media services for businesses](#).

// Conclusion

Facebook is only part of a complete Internet marketing campaign. Every solid Internet marketing campaign begins with a well-designed and properly SEO'd website. Remember, you don't own your presence on Facebook. The company can decide to deactivate your account or shut down at any time. If that should happen, you lose everything you put into it. The best Facebook strategy is one that points consumers back to your website—Internet 'property' that you *do* own.

// About SonicSEO.com

SonicSEO.com is a comprehensive Internet marketing firm dedicated to helping business get more clients from the Web. We not only design Web sites that get found in the search engines, but help businesses manage their social media presence for maximum impact, including creating daily messages, engaging with consumers, managing a business' online reputation, running contests and more.

At SonicSEO.com, we're proud of our innovative Web designs that we custom tailor to every client (no canned websites here!). But we're even more proud of the fact that our websites drive business to our clients.

We are search engine optimization (SEO) and social media experts dedicated to making your Web presence profitable. With an entire team of professionals with various areas of expertise in SEO, Web design, Copywriting, Link Building, Statistics Analysis, Social Media, and Customer Service, our integrated team approach enables us to provide you with the best results and service possible.

SonicSEO.com has over 14 years of experience designing stellar websites that get you found by consumers who are already looking for the products/services you offer. Our teams are led by individuals with advanced degrees in mathematics, computer science, business, communications and law. We've provided Internet marketing services to over 3,700 clients throughout the United States and Canada and are one of the largest SEO firms in the Southwest.

For more information about how search engine optimization and social media can get you more clients from the Web, visit us online at www.SonicSEO.com or give us call at 505-821-2000. To get to know us even better, 'like' us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/sonicseoabq) to see who we are in the community and follow us on Twitter (@SonicSEO) to keep up with the latest trends on Internet marketing.