

IDEAS

InsideIDEAS > Lessons Learned Page 36 > The Lesson Room Page 38 > The Retail Doctor Page 40 > Next Gen Retailing Page 42

THE TECH BEAT | BY JAMES HARDING

FINE TUNE YOUR FACEBOOK

Does Facebook feel like a waste of time? Do you find yourself pouring a steady stream of resources into creating and posting content with little or no real results? If you feel like you're fighting a losing battle with Facebook, don't feel bad. You aren't alone. Try incorporating these ideas into your 2016 strategic plan.

1. FOCUS ON ENGAGEMENT.

Nobody logs into Facebook to see promotional content. When we log into Facebook, we're looking for something personal and entertaining. The last thing on our minds is an upcoming "Closed Door Sale." To help users consume the Facebook content they are most interested in, Facebook limits the average 1,500 potential posts down to the 300 posts it thinks the user will find most relevant. The trick is to make Facebook think your posts are relevant to its users. You do that with engagement. Consider posting entertaining content to your page — even if it has little or nothing to do with your products. Each time a customer "likes" your content or comments on something you have posted, they are engaged



'Facebookers lose when they fail to ask their fans to interact with posts.'

and, thus, much more likely to see your message later. According to Constant Contact, the ideal ratio is as follows: 50 percent of your Facebook content should be funny and/or entertaining, 30 percent should be educational, and only 20 percent should be promotional or "salesy."

2. ADJUST YOUR TIMING.

Do you know when most people visit your page? According to Buddy Media, businesses

that regularly post more than twice a day see an average 40 percent less engagement than businesses that post one or two times a day. As usual, quality wins over quantity. The trick is to post great content right before your fans log in so your posts appear at the top of their newsfeed. Click the "Insights" tab at the top of your Facebook business page and then click the "Posts" link in the top-left column to see when most people visit your page. Find the two times per day when most people visit your page and schedule your posts to happen just before those times.

3. SAY IT WITH PICTURES.

With Facebook, a picture is worth more than 1,000 words. The right picture will get your customer's attention and build engagement because it's quick and easily digestible, making your fans more likely to "like," comment or share it.

4. ASK FOR THE SHARE.

Salespeople lose when they fail to ask for the sale. Facebookers lose when they fail to ask their fans to interact with posts. Why not post a photo of your top two guitar brands and ask your fans to "like" the photo if they prefer

brand A or comment on the photo if they prefer brand B? Ask them to share the post if they love both brands. This is a double-win for your page. It builds both engagement (which makes Facebook treat your future posts as "relevant") and it gives you valuable feedback about your products.

5. HOST A CONTEST.

The best way to get people to interact with your Facebook page is to host a Facebook contest. Recently, I hosted a Halloween costume contest on my page and my company saw a 15,000-percent increase (yes, 15,000 percent) in fan engagement for the three weeks we ran the contest. Costume contests, Facebook cover contests, "Post a Photo" contests and "Write a Song" contests are easily done without outside help. Remember: the point is to have fun and encourage your fans to interact with your page.

Remember that Facebook is a social medium — and, just like your in-person social gatherings — your friends want to enjoy their time with you, so make your page engaging! **MI**

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