

There are more than 800 million people using Facebook every day. This platform offers more than just a way to stay connected to friends and family; it is an essential tool in the B2B marketing toolbox. Facebook allows your business to be available to people on a trusted, popular platform, where prospects can see “real” people (their friends, family or colleagues) interacting with you and your brand. This sets the stage for you to build stronger, more immediate relationships with them.

But, businesses need to strike that critical balance of offering content that is relevant and adds value, with content that just plain entertains. At Marketo, we like to ask two questions before every Facebook interaction we plan:

1. Does this help our brand's likeability?
2. Is this interesting, engaging, useful content?

Posting for the sake of posting can actually hurt your chances of being seen. The second you post something that is not engaging or relevant, EdgeRank will stop amplifying your posts and placing them in your fans newsfeeds (more on that below).

Facebook Pages can help your company build awareness, share enthusiasm, create loyalty, strengthen inbound marketing, and promote peer-to-peer sharing. First, let's break down the elements of a Facebook page—and how you can take advantage of them:

### EdgeRank Explained

The content you create and share is your “make-or-break” component on Facebook. To get the most out of your Facebook page and presence, your posts' appearing on your fans' newsfeeds is essential. This is where EdgeRank becomes important. EdgeRank is Facebook's algorithm that personalizes users' newsfeeds and inserts posts it thinks will interest them. In very simplified terms, if users (or their friends) are interacting with your company/brand on a fairly frequent basis, you show up; if not, you get dropped.

When it comes to Facebook marketing, you can use two metrics to measure your success: engagement rate and the “people are talking about this” rating:

- Your engagement rate can be determined by dividing your total “Likes” and comments by your total number of fans (Likes + Comments/Total # of Fans). That's why your posts need to be engaging and spark a reaction. A high engagement rate helps you build your EdgeRank and gets you seen more often.
- Your “people are talking about this” rating is basically your “buzz” metric. It measures who's talking about you or your posts on their pages and can be found in your page's Facebook insights as well as on your page. For example, on Marketo's Facebook page, the “talking about this” number is located on the profile page just under the cover photo and the chart below that is trending that number. It basically shows when Marketo's activities in the real, virtual, or social worlds are sparking conversation on Facebook.

The next logical question is, “How do we increase our interaction and sharing?” To boost interaction, businesses need to post more often and engage their consumers in a two-way dialogue. More than 70% of interactions occur during the first hour after a post is made. Keep your interactions up by posting more often and by being online and available right after you post. In other words, don't post and go to bed. And keep in mind that a post posed as a “question” tends to drive more interaction than one written as a statement.

### Facebook's New Timeline: What You Need to Know

Facebook began rolling out its new timeline format in September 2011. Here's how it better serves B2B companies:

- **The “scrapbook” style** lets you prominently display key snapshots of your business' brand, marketing focus, and gives you the ability to tell a story and to highlight your company's milestones.
- **Interactions, comments on Fan pages, and “Likes”** about your company appear in a user's timeline. “Likes” will also appear in a box at the top of their page, keeping you prominently top of mind.
- **The ticker** shows a live stream of friends' activities and conveniently lets users “Like” a page without leaving their own newsfeed. In other words, Facebook users can easily see when their friends are interacting with or commenting about your brand and they can do the same.
- **The timeline** offers more branding and lead-capture options. The large cover image presents plenty of room for your branding, marketing images and calls to action so you can capture the eye of a potential customer and get them on your page.

## How to See and Be Seen

Remember that Facebook's EdgeRank algorithm rewards pages in the newsfeed based on the number of interactions a page receives. An interaction can be defined as a summary of "Likes," posts, or comments about the page.

To show up in as many users' top newsfeeds as possible, your content must be fresh, engaging, current and compelling. Then it becomes a cycle; you post content that gets "Likes" and comments, and your future content appears in the newsfeeds of those that "Liked" and commented on earlier content. Don't forget: as prospects interact with you through "Likes," reposts, or shares, you should be tracking engagement.

Visual Content is critical to sharing and maintaining EdgeRank. On Facebook, people love sharing visual content, so you want to make sure that you are leveraging something that is visually stimulating. At Marketo, we use a variety of visual content on our Facebook page to get engagement from our followers.

## Facebook Groups

The Group feature is useful for demonstrating your company's passion for a topic, and gathers like-minded people to share ideas. The best part is that the more people join your group, the more it gets promoted to their friends and networks, increasing the group's popularity and growth. Creating a Facebook Group is a great way for businesses to create awareness, increase inbound links and foster loyalty.

## Facebook Lists

Facebook launched this feature in response to Google+'s circles, so it functions in a very similar way. You can subscribe to and organize lists for different topics or influencers you want to follow. As an example, you might have a list for Social Media Influencers and another list for competitors. Through lists you can easily view and post to select groups or a company, which makes it easier for you to monitor and engage.

## Facebook Promoted Posts

Promoted posts show up in the newsfeed of all your fans and are visible to their friends as well. It becomes a sponsored story that is seen by more people than a regular post, so be sure that when you do choose to promote a post, it is strong, current and compelling. It is pretty safe to say that businesses will never be able to compete with posts that are strictly entertainment-based or for social purposes only. But by using this promoted post feature, you can call attention to posts that you believe will generate the most impact.

Facebook suggests using Promoted Posts for any of the following to get you more exposure:

- Unique, vibrant, and interesting photos and videos
- Offers (still in beta)
- Exclusive events or news
- Questions

We found the magic formula for promoted posts to be this: Clever messaging with a fun visual, all tied back to a strong offer or piece of content.

## Facebook Ads

While your Facebook ads need to appeal to your audience, think outside the box. Use eye catching pictures and compelling language. Remember: you're competing for attention in a noisy environment.

## Facebook Apps

Before the timeline changes took place, you could capture "Likes" via your welcome page by gating your content and encouraging users to "Like" your page for access to this exclusive content. This has gone away with timeline. Now Facebook gives you the option to feature up to twelve apps. Four of these apps are shown by default, with the remaining apps under the fold and only visible by clicking and expanding the tab on the right. Although you cannot move the photo app as the default, you can control which other three apps show above the fold. It's important to optimize these three and rotate them frequently with fresh offers.

Allowing you to change the apps appearing above the fold is one of the most interactive and engaging portions of the timeline and your best chance to showcase a call to action or offer that will convert. Take this into consideration when selecting the display images of your apps. Consider the image a small advertisement rather than an image.

We've even developed a custom application within Facebook that incentivizes "Likes" of our offers. This form syncs with Marketo and captures the lead in real time while offering the user a frictionless experience because they can fill it in without leaving Facebook.