

How to Use Facebook to Promote Your Newsagency

Being on Facebook can help any retail business build its profile in its local community and beyond since the social media website has no geographic boundaries.

Setting up a Facebook page for a business is easy and it is free. However, take your time, research what others have done and learn from their missteps.

Facebook is all about connecting people, talking with them, sharing stories. It is not a place to blatantly sell items - otherwise it would be an advertisement.

A good business Facebook page:

- Takes you behind the scene at the business.
- Provides a place where customers and their friends can communicate.
- Humanises the business.
- Shares opportunities.
- Promotes community projects.
- Thanks employees and customers
- Helps tell the retail narrative. By *narrative* I mean your retail story – who you are, what you believe, how you help the community.

Each of these goals and activities can be achieved simply through wall posts on the business page. It is simple - as Facebook itself is.

Once you start a Facebook page, however, you need to work at it, keep it going. People join to find out more and if you stop providing this they will soon fade away. Plan two or three posts a week, not too many and people will soon disconnect if you start flooding their Facebook feed with unhelpful content.

To build your Facebook friend numbers you will need to promote your business page. This is done in a variety of ways:

1. Print your Facebook member details on your business cards, make it easy for people to find you.
2. Include details on your business newsletter.
3. Promote your Facebook page in a note on receipts.
4. If you are one of the first businesses in town to use Facebook, let the local paper know – they may run a story.
5. Place a sign in the store window - browsers may see this when the store is closed.
6. Have a sign made for the back of business vehicles.
7. Run a competition where entry is for your friends on Facebook – enter the competition by liking your page.
8. Run a fund raiser for a local popular community group and use Facebook to promote this. Ask the community group to reciprocate your support by promoting your Facebook page.
9. The best way to grow your Facebook presence is to become friends with others. This broadens the pool accessible to you.

10. Give your employees some ideas for mentioning the Facebook page when serving customers.
11. Have an offer at the counter with a note: AS SEEN ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE.
12. Join other groups and friends – this is really how communities grow.

Too many retail businesses use social media sites to promote products. A better use is to tell stories about the business for it is through well written stories that the humanity of the business is expressed. This can draw more shoppers to the business.

Tell stories about your people, special events, seasons... anything which provides a more complete picture about the business, its points of difference and why it is a good place to visit.

Don't overwrite, keep it simple. This is how people communicate on social media sites like Facebook. Keep it personal too - the better people get to know you the more they will feel connected to the business.

Retail stores using Facebook report deeper customer engagement and this is what leads to the desired business outcome.

Sometimes, on the social media journey, you may find that what you want to say about the business is not true. This is where the experience can lead the business to change itself to have something better to say. Everyone wins.

Embrace the Facebook opportunity and be prepared to learn more about your business and your customers.

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