

# Paying to Play on Facebook

## A Guide to Advertising

Facebook is becoming known as a pay-to-play tool as organizations are finding it challenging, if not nearly impossible, to get content into their audiences' News Feeds without creating an ad budget. Facebook acknowledges this occurrence and holds that competition for each News Feed story is increasing and people are connecting and sharing more than ever.

### The Basics

On any given day, an average of **1,500 potential stories** from friends and pages could appear in a typical Facebook user's News Feed each time he or she logs on; of these, Facebook displays about 300. Breaking through the noise takes a thorough understanding of the way Facebook operates.



#### Build

Facebook uses an algorithm to determine if your message appears in your fans' news feed. Previously, it took three variables into consideration: the type and age of a post and the relationship between your organization and its fans. However, in 2016, **Facebook updated** its algorithm to improve user experience. Now, there are three signals that determine a post's relevance to each user: the people, organizations and news outlets a user interacts with, the types of posts (photos, videos or links) users interact with most frequently, and posts with high user engagement. Improve your score by building better posts and a better page.

#### The Mysterious Algorithm

There is no way to track exactly how Facebook determines if an organization's content will appear in its fans' News Feeds. Facebook admits that as people increasingly share content, the organic reach of pages will likely continue to decline. **A recent study** found that pages with fewer than 1,000 likes have an average organic reach of 22.8 percent. **More on organic reach here.** It's safe to say that if organizations are not willing to pay to play, their content will slowly reach fewer and fewer people.



#### Getting Started

In order for someone to create an ad for a Facebook page, he or she has to be listed as a Page admin for that page. To assign a user this role, go to the page, click "Edit Page" and select "Manage Admin Roles." As a good rule of thumb, make sure that whenever Facebook asks you to update your page's layout to its new settings, always click update. Facebook changes constantly and keeping your page updated with new settings will help to ensure your content reaches the right audiences.



#### Budget

The key to determining an appropriate budget for Facebook ads is to test. Try starting with a small amount such as \$50 - \$100 and experiment with the different types of ads to determine what your audiences respond to best. Try promoting the same post to two different groups of people: those who like similar keywords as your issue and those who like similar organizations. Track the reach of the ads to determine which performed better. Use the "When your fans are online" metric in your Facebook "Insights" section to ensure you are promoting ads at the most popular times.

## CPC

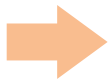


### Cost

Facebook allows you to pay for impressions (CPM) or pay for clicks (CPC). If your goal is audience growth, maximize your dollars by paying only for ads that people click on as opposed to paying per one thousand people who will potentially see your ad. See more on bidding and pricing [here](#).

## Types of Ads

There are a few types of ads you can create. Choose the type of ad to run based on your objectives. Manage each ad by clicking the “Manage Ads” tab located in the drop down menu on the far right of your home page. Be sure to check the size [guidelines](#) for each ad. Here are a few of the main types of Facebook ads, but there more than 10 total.



- **Boost your page posts:** This is the easiest and cheapest ad to create and results come fast. You can use this option quickly by clicking “Boost Post” on an individual post.
- **Get more page likes:** This is where you can get creative. Think about the images that describe your organization well. Look for ones that show what your organization accomplishes and who you impact. Use your own photos or use a source such as [Pixabay](#) or [Google’s Advanced Image Search](#) to find free images. Upload up to six images, keeping in mind that text cannot take up more than 20 percent of the image. The [Facebook Grid tool](#) can help you determine if you have too much text. Next, write a short headline and message. Try using your mission statement but add a bit of flair to it.
- **Invite people to an event:** Friends of your fans are the best new audience to target with this type of ad.
- **Send traffic to your website:** Create an ad that directs Facebook users to your website. You can used this to highlight a new blog post, your current advocacy campaign, your donation page, or your website’s homepage. Track the success of ads by installing a tracking code provided by Facebook to the webpages where conversions happen.

## Audience Targeting

Facebook allows advertisers to narrow an audience down using demographic targeting. To access more advanced audience targeting options, organizations should install [Facebook’s Power Editor](#). It is more complex than the traditional ads manager and was originally intended for use by businesses managing multiple Facebook campaigns and ads.



1. **Targeting audiences based on interests and demographics:** It’s best to start by making a complete list of things your audiences might “like” on Facebook (e.g., TV shows, local news outlets or newspapers, volunteering, etc.). Identify their education level, what language they are likely to speak, their age, gender, location and whether or not you’d like to target friends of your fans or broader audiences not connected with your page. Once you have this list, start experimenting and testing to find your tailored audience group. You can also target users based on their donation behaviors. More on targeting [here](#).



2. **Creating Custom Audience groups:** Organizations can upload their supporters’ data (email addresses and phone numbers) collected outside of Facebook to target ads to them on Facebook. This tactic is helpful to repeat an ask to current supporters of your organization on an additional channel. Seeing an ask more than once increases the likelihood that your supporters will respond. To [create a custom audience](#) go to your “Manage Ads” tab, select “Audiences” from the left side and click “Create Audience” then choose whether you’d like to upload your Custom Audience through MailChimp or a data file.



3. **Create similar audiences to your Custom Audience groups:** After you create a Custom Audience, you can generate an audience similar to it. Facebook allows you to generate your audience with either one percent or five percent specificity. One percent specificity generates an audience with 99 percent of your custom audience’s characteristics such as interests, “likes”, demographics, etc.