MAXIMIZING FACEBOOK

Inspiring Social Change. Increasing the chances of your content appearing in your fans' News Feed is not rocket science, yet requires a smart strategy and following best practices.

Strategize

It's always wise to build a plane before you fly it. First, establish objectives for your organization's Facebook strategy. They should be S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound). Next, research your target audiences to determine what they care about, the language they use, where they are and how you will reach them. The Spitfire Smart Chart® helps you think through these questions and incorporate Facebook into your overarching communication strategy.

Build

Facebook uses an algorithm to determine if your message appears in your fans' News Feed. It takes into account hundreds of variables and predicts whether a given user will like, click, comment, share, hide or even mark a post as spam. The algorithm measures each post with a certain degree of confidence, called a "relevance score," that is specific to the post and the post's target audience. Facebook's sorting algorithm ranks every post that could potentially show up in a user's feed, placing posts with higher scores at the top. While Facebook is regularly changing how it prioritizes content, the best way to increase your chances of getting in front of users is by building more engaging posts and pages.

+Photos

- Share photos and videos of your supporters, events and other aspects of your cause. Keep videos to under two minutes so viewers stay engaged.

- Include subtitles in your videos to accommodate the estimated 85 percent of Facebook users who watch videos without sound. If you use Facebook's Power Editor tool, you can have Facebook automatically generate subtitles for you.

- Make your profile photo your organization's logo. Profile photos should be at least 170 x 170 pixels.

- Capture users' attention with your cover photo and embody your cause with the call to action and website link in the written description. Text should not cover more than 20 percent of the photo. Cover photos should be 851 x 315 pixels.

+Posts

- Limit posts to 40 characters. Shorter, succinct posts receive more engagement. Posts with questions and a length of 100-119 characters also perform well.

- Create content that lends itself to sharing by telling authentic stories and including emotional asks.

- Create a dialogue with your fans by responding when they comment and by posting questions. Speak in the first-person narrative and try having a member of your organization post in their own voice every now and then to add a personal touch.

- Share timely, issue-centric content to establish your organization as a thought leader in your area of focus. Facebook's algorithm will boost your content automatically if you use trending phrases. These include news items and other topics in the trending section on your homepage.

+About Section and Apps

- Add links in your About section to your website and social media sites. Include your address and common keywords about your cause and highlight your organization's mission in 25 words or less.

- Add apps to your page such as "Events" and "Donate Now." You can rearrange the order, delete or add more apps in the admin panel.

Grow

Expand your audience by promoting your Facebook page and improving your content strategy.

+Cross-pollinate: Use Your Website and Email

Use your organization's website to encourage supporters to "like" your page. Add the Facebook "like" or "share" box to your home page and articles so that visitors can share pages directly from your website to their Facebook timeline. Put Facebook links and content in your newsletter.

+Promote Your Organization, Posts or Stories

Facebook has two programs that help organizations spread their message and gain new supporters. To promote your organization's page, event or external website, create a paid ad that combines a photo and text. Use your own photos or use Pixabay or Google's Advanced Image Search to find free images. Or consider "boosting" your highest-quality posts that are sparking conversation with your fans for as low as $5 to $10. Boosting will move posts up the ranks on your audiences' News Feeds.

+Mix It Up and Test

There are several types of content that you could share, including articles about your issue(s), promotional pieces about your organization and staff and posts from partner organizations. Find the right balance by testing which types of content perform best with your audiences and then include a mix of those types throughout the day. Make sure to tag your organization and others in shared content to connect your organization with their fans' News Feeds.

+Plan Your Posts

Post at least five times a week. Check your Insights section to determine the best time to post content. Use Hootsuite to schedule Facebook posts and photos.

Listen

Every week use your Insights section in Facebook (located on your profile page in the top bar) to view performance metrics for your page and posts. Experiment with the time and content that you are posting to learn what works best for your audience. There are many important Facebook metrics to track, but be sure to check these often:

Posts: Click on the "Posts" tab and sort your posts by "Engagements," selecting the "Post Clicks / Reactions, Comments and Shares" subtab. Tracking helps you see your posts that have sparked the most likes, comments or shares, and they usually have the biggest reach (how many News Feeds you've reached).

When Your Fans Are Online: Use this graph to pinpoint the best time to reach your target audiences.

Your Fans: Go to the "People" tab and click on "Your Fans." You will find basic demographic data about your fans, including age, gender, location and language of those who like your page. Are these your target audiences? If not, it may be necessary to increase your use of promoted posts and ads on Facebook.