HOW TO GROW YOUR FACEBOOK AUDIENCE

CONTENTS
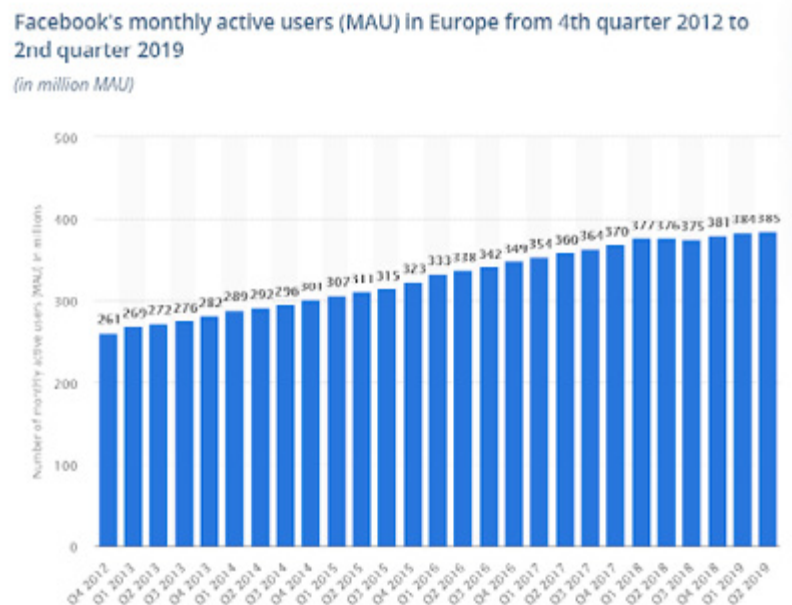
WHY SHOULD YOU GROW YOUR FACEBOOK AUDIENCE?

Facebook has 2.41 billion monthly active users, making it a fantastic place for brand exposure and customer interaction.

Mobile traffic is increasingly important to marketers as smartphone penetration continues to grow and 5G data networks expand. Plenty of people break up their work day by glancing at their phones for some social media time. In fact, Facebook has over 1.74 billion users that access their mobile app on a daily basis, and checking their Newsfeed and growing, giving businesses regular and frequent access to their mobile audience.

According to Statista, about 94% of marketers report using Facebook to market their business, ahead of Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube – and 96% of advertising experts say that Facebook produces greater ROI than any other social network.

Facebook's monthly active users (MAU) in Europe from 4th quarter 2012 to 2nd quarter 2019 (in million MAU)

WHAT ARE YOUR OBJECTIVES?

Define the reason for wanting to grow your audience before you start. For example, to increase traffic to your page or website, improve social proof, build brand loyalty. This will inform your strategy, from the kind of content you create, to the audiences you target with your posts and/or ads.

Also identify the amount of growth you're aiming for and in what timeframe, whether this is a specific number or a percentage of your current audience.

Go for quality over quantity: a small but hyper-engaged audience may help you meet your business objectives over a large and unresponsive one.

MINE YOUR FACEBOOK INSIGHTS

The best place to begin thinking about growing your Facebook audience is by diving into the data about your existing audience and current organic reach.

From your Page
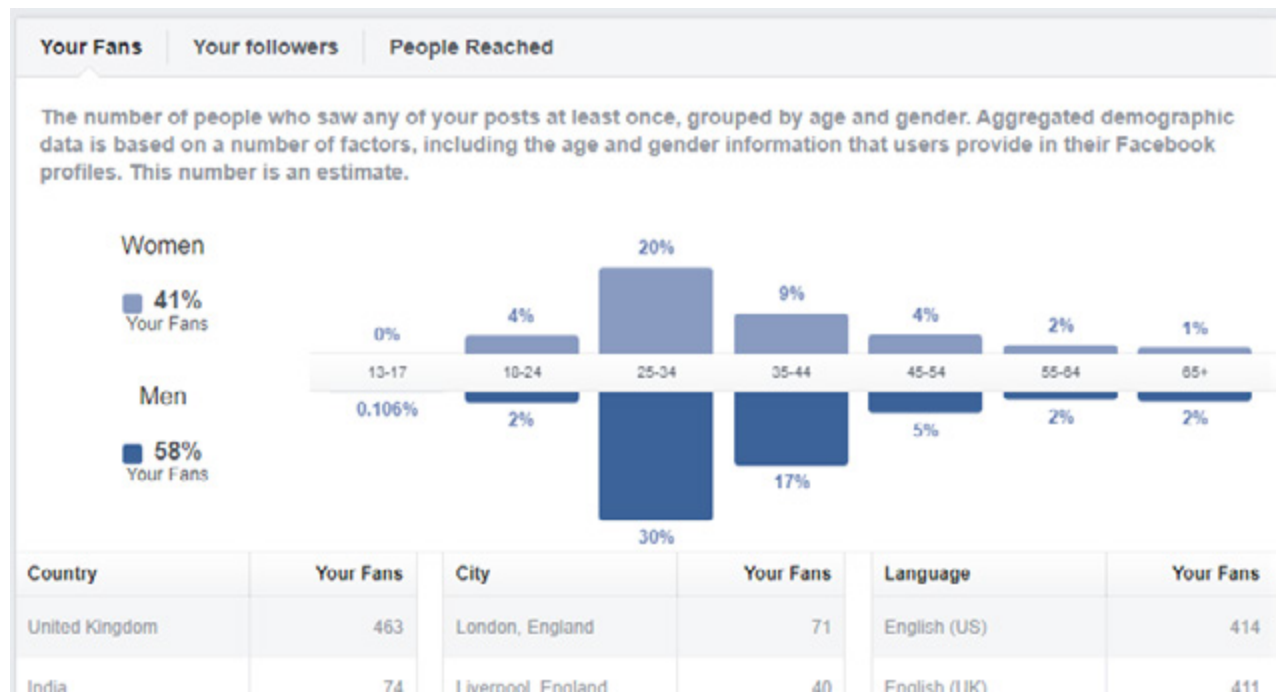
Click on 'Insights' in the top nav of your page, then 'People' on the left hand menu. This section allows you to understand your audience with aggregated information including age, gender and location. You'll also see when people are looking at your page and how they found it, to help you a target persona specifically for Facebook and identify what kind of content gets the best response.

You can use this information to:

- Learn which posts get the most attention, allowing you to create more of the kinds of posts that people will interact with.

- Adjust your page to encourage people to take the actions you want.

- Get aggregated details on your audience by age, gender and location about who's looking at your page and when, allowing you to tailor your content to their interests.

From Ads manager

If your Page has more than 1000 likes, Facebook Audience Insights allows you to track and analyse even more granular information about your audience using the variables down the left hand side.
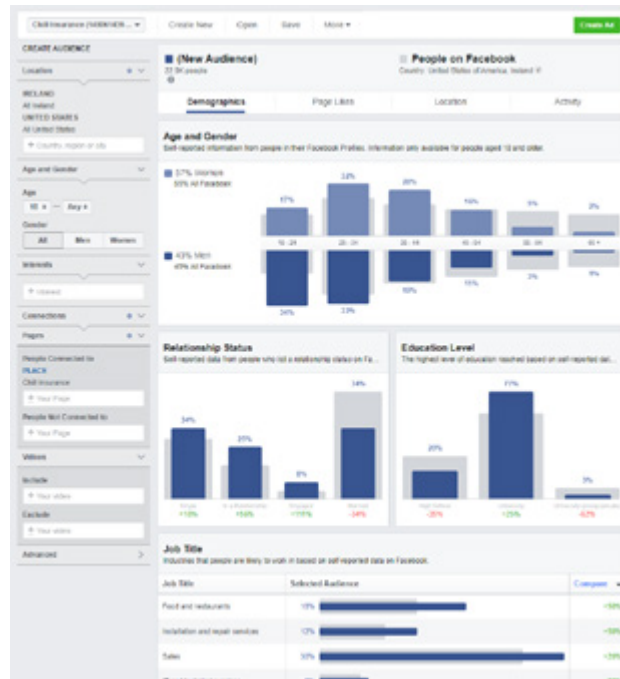
A really useful feature here under 'Page Likes' is that Facebook identifies other Facebook Pages that are likely to be relevant to your audience. This is an extremely useful feature to help you surface topics and content that people interested in your company also engage with to help refine your target persona, and to cast your net to a wider audience with high potential.
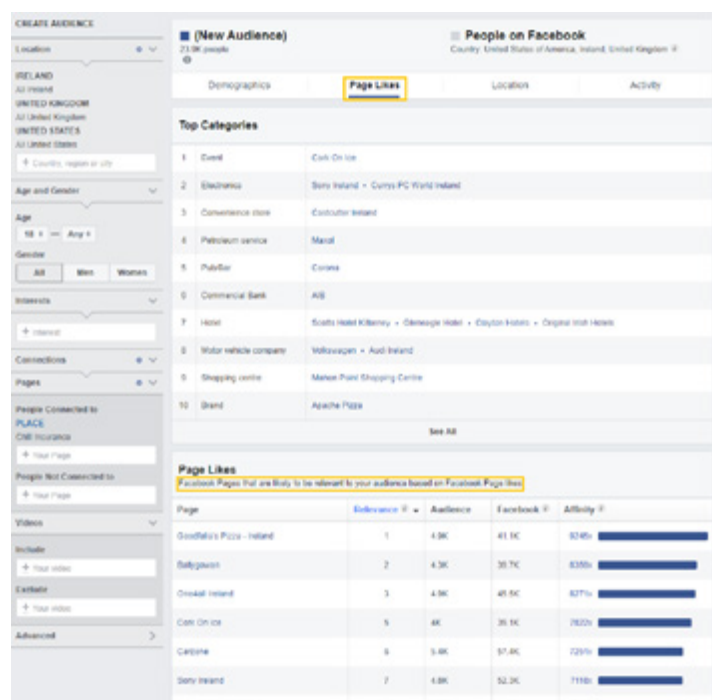
USE FACEBOOK'S ALGORITHM TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Considering that there are more than 30 billion pieces of content published every month on Facebook, there needs to be some way to organise it. So Facebook's algorithm combines information they have about the post, including the type of post, who it's from and the engagement it's received, to more accurately predict whether people are likely to find it valuable. This prioritises post from friends, and demotes abusive and low-quality content such as clickbait, engagement bait, and web pages with little substance and disruptive ads.

Does this limit the reach of the content you post? Yes - but this is not Facebook's direct intention, and can work in your favour.

Social Media Today's Andrew Hutchinson makes the point that: "… lessening the flow of spam, and the sharing of junk links, could help improve your opportunities to reach more people with your posts, as there'll be more space for other content".

This means that by putting authentic engagement and relevancy at the centre of your strategy, it's possible for Facebook's algorithm to work to your advantage in growing your Facebook audience.

How to get your posts seen by the most people in Facebook's Newsfeed

The goal of the Newsfeed is to show people the posts that are most relevant to them – more than a billion people use theirs every day to discuss stories from their friends and the sources they care about.

Here's a whistle-stop explanation of how Facebook's algorithm organises information and prioritises what to show in each users' Newsfeeds.

The algorithm is divided into a series of four steps:

1. **Inventory:** New stories from friends and from the publishers the user follows.
2. **Signals:** Signals are things like how old a given story is (recency is very important) and who posted it. Facebook even takes into account how fast a user's internet connection is or what kind of device they're on. These signals are also informed by complaints from users about spam, clickbait or false news.
3. **Predictions:** Using steps 1 and 2, Facebook predicts how likely someone is to comment or share a given story.
4. **Relevancy Scores:** The predictions are weighted and calculated into a relevancy score.

In a nutshell, Facebook's algorithm aims to figure out what users want to see, based on their profile, network and behaviour.

This means if you're posting content that drives Likes, comments, and shares from your audience, these social endorsements will often show up in their friends' Newsfeeds. This is a great way to get your content and Page in front of an entirely new audience.

KEEP PUBLISHING AND SHARING GOOD CONTENT

The issue of quality should come as no big surprise to marketers: the content you produce and share needs to be relevant, useful and unique to engage with their audience and stay on the right side of Facebook's ranking algorithm.

Not every update you send out on your Facebook page should be promotional. Rather than concentrating exclusively on sales, look for ways to delight your audience through content that appeals to them.

For instance:

- Ask for opinions and responses, then keep the ball rolling by interacting, responding and thanking.

- Encourage conversations.

- Respond to questions.

- Offer exclusive content, such live streaming is a useful tactic for helping to build up anticipation before the event and generating FOMO (fear of missing out).

- Celebrate business milestones and new announcements.

- Give previews of new products and upcoming projects.

- Share video clips of events you attend.

- Share important tips related to your niche.

- Snap selfies of your team.

- Post content that will generate comments.

- Ask people to share with their own networks – 'social proof' is a powerful way to grow your brand on social media as people are more likely to trust recommendations from people they know.

- Identify points of interest in the discussion and explore these in more detail. Learning what engages users will not only boost that interaction, but inform the content you post in future.

Always focus on the agenda of your fans first, listening carefully to your audience and creating shareable and memorable content that's emotionally engaging, or that will spark a discussion. Share content that people will want to read and share with their friends and colleagues; that's relevant but different and memorable enough to make you stand out from your competitors. If you do this, you'll discover you can't go wrong. Facebook is all about encouraging your followers to tell their friends about what you have to offer.

Bonus tip:

- Invite people who have liked your individual posts to like your page.

- Click on the Insights tab of you page.

- Find a post with high reach and engagement and click on the number of people who liked your post.

- This will bring up a list of the people who liked your post and whether they are a current fan of your Facebook page. For those who are not fans, you can invite them to follow your page.
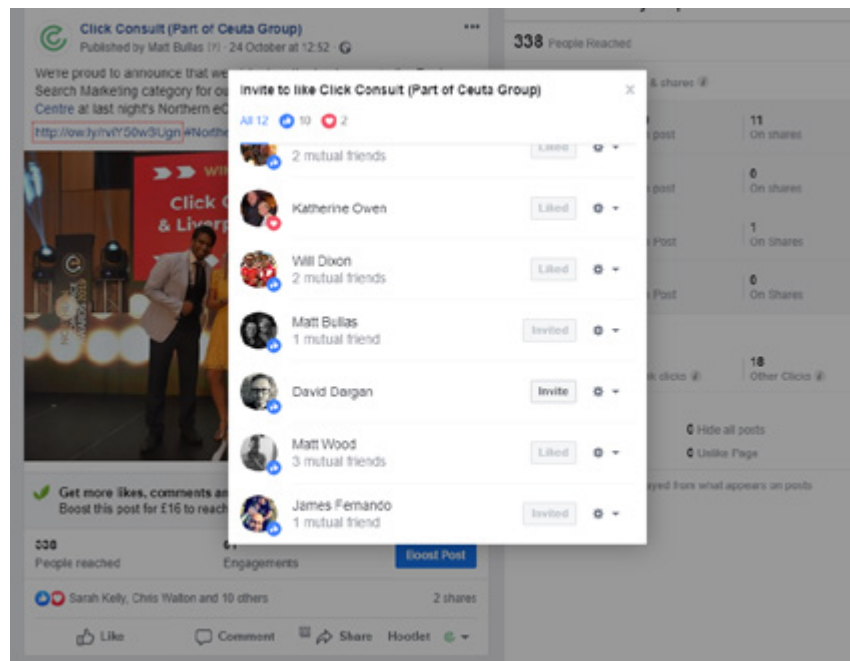
ORGANIC POST TARGETING

You can optimise your organic posts by serving them to relevant customers based on their gender, age, education, location, and even interest (your post has to at least target 20 people).
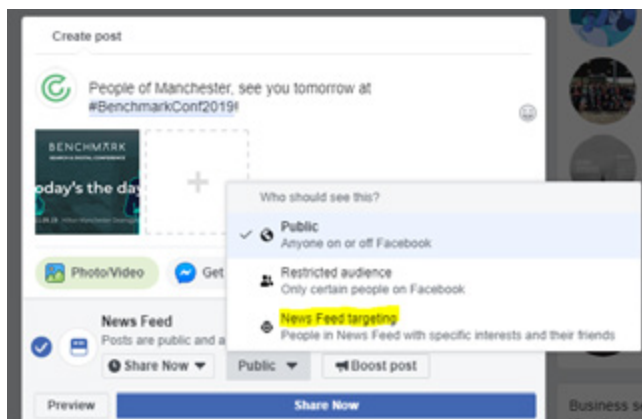
You can also set an end date for your post to stop showing in the Newsfeed.
The post only limits the visibility of your post in the feed. On your Page's timeline, it'll show up to all of your fans. Here's how to do it:

1. Make sure you've got the targeting feature enabled on your page
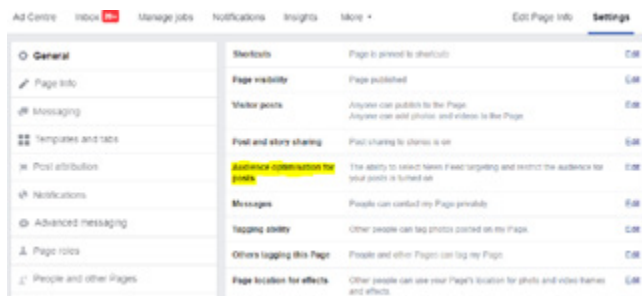
2. Create your post, then choose Newsfeed targeting from the Public dropdown menu.


3. Choose one or more categories for targeting your post.

You can then dig into your Facebook Insights for data about your audience and choose targeting parameters based on your goals.

LEVERAGE FACEBOOK STORIES

Stories - short photo collections or video clips first popularised by Snapchat in 2014 - are one of the fastest growing segments across social media.

While your Facebook Newsfeed houses your posts indefinitely, or until you manually delete them, a Story is a temporary form of content that lasts only a day, which they get deleted automatically from your friends' view. Consisting of photos or images, you can decorate your posts with text, drawings, stickers, and Snapchat-like animated filters, share it with all your friends or send it to a subset of friends you select.

When you publish a Story, it appears in a horizontally scrolling feed at the top of the Newsfeed of people who like your page.
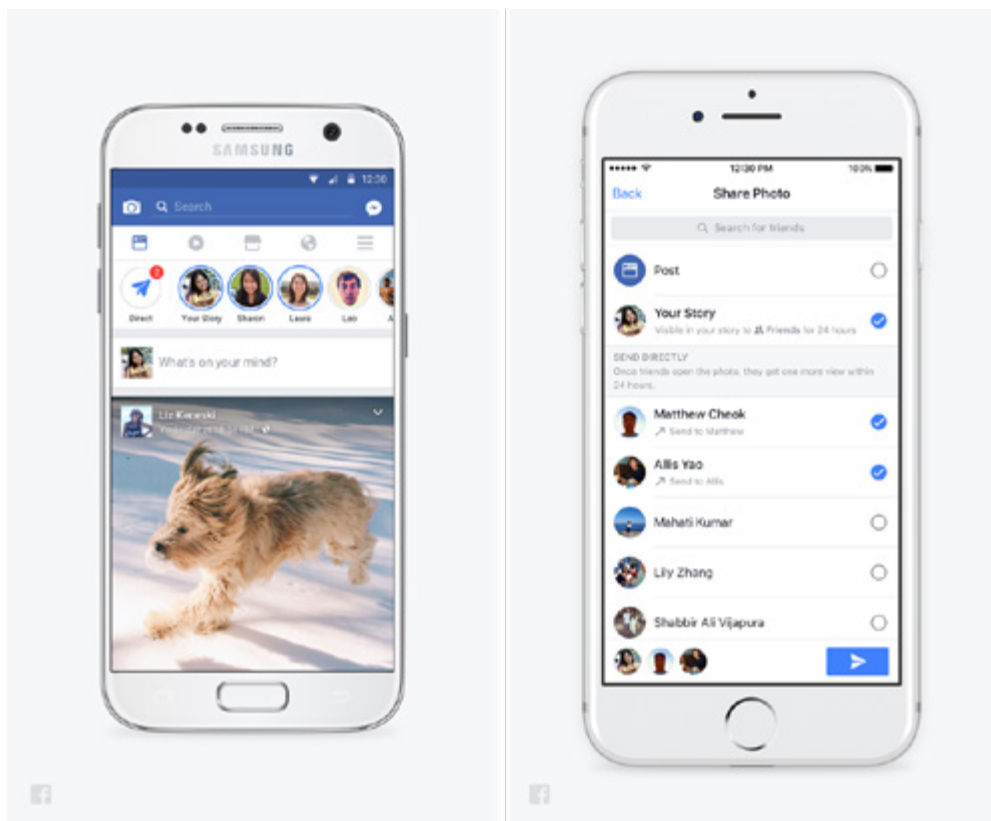
For marketers, Facebook's planned expansion of this segment means that it will only become more important in the future, with the kind of content people share moving away from text and towards photos and videos.

You can share Stories organically from your company's page on the mobile app, or set up a Story ad (see the later section on using Facebook ads to widen your audience).

WHY ARE FACEBOOK STORIES A GOOD TOOL FOR MARKETERS?

- Stories have high visibility, appearing at the very top of the Newsfeed of everyone who likes your page – prime real estate. They even follow users as they scroll through their news on a desktop. They also appear in a row at the top of your Messenger inbox.

- It taps into the fact that people find images and video more eye-catching, engaging sharable.

- It's 'in the moment' nature allows your brand in an organic and authentic way, with easy-to-consume content that builds affinity and trust.

- Unlike when you post on your Newsfeed, you can keep track of who's viewed it by tapping on the eye in the bottom left hand corner of the Stories (with Newsfeed posts, you can only see who has liked or commented).

- Use Stories to:

  · Get personal: Let your customers see what goes on behind the scenes in your office.

  · Announce: Share important updates and announcements for a limited time.

  · Host competitions and giveaways: Reward engaged customers for paying attention.

  · Show limited-time sales and discount codes

- Adding live filters within Stories provide a chance for you to build your brand image, for example:

  · Use filters relevant to your brand.

  · Add themes specific to the promotions you're currently running.

  · Use colours and text styles consistent with your brand image
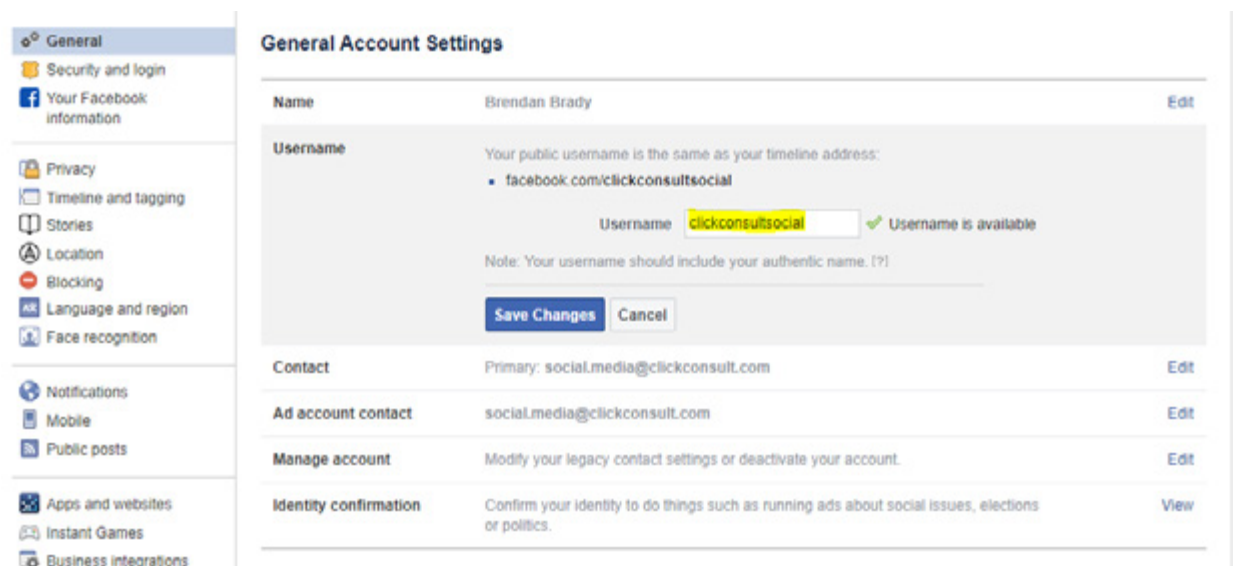
FACEBOOK SEO

Take into account that Facebook makes the content on Facebook pages indexable by search engines.

Make it easier for potential new followers and fans to find you both within Facebook and Google by:

•   Embedding your page in website

•   Claiming your vanity URL

•   Placing your keywords in strategic locations, including your About section, your Services section and, of course, your posts.

HOST TIMELINE CONTESTS TO BOOST ENGAGEMENT

You'll find many ways to deal with a reduced reach on Facebook, but one option that works practically all the time is to host a timeline contest. This is a popular option to boost engagement by providing a prize to those who participate. You can reward your visitors or fans for actions such as liking a page post, posting an image on a post, private messaging your page, or even commenting on your post.

However, you should bear in mind that Facebook enforces strict rules about what you can't do when running a contest. Specifically, you can't ask people to enter by doing the following:

- like a page

- share a page

- tag themselves in pictures

- like a different page to enter

Boosting a contest with a Facebook ad is an effective way to get more eyes on it, which can in then encourage people to share it with their friends organically.

PROMOTE OFF-FACEBOOK

Your Facebook marketing strategy should be aligned with your overall marketing goals rather than stand alone, so take any opportunities to remind audiences from other channels (including face-to-face) to promote your presence.

Here are some ideas.

- Reaching out to your existing networks, by sending an announcement out to your email list.

- Make sure you add Facebook buttons to your website and email newsletter so your audience can find your Page easily.

- Leave a link to your Facebook page in the bio of your other social accounts.

- Place clickable social icons on your cover photos.

- Broadcast to your other networks about your Facebook page and ask them to engage.

FACEBOOK GROUPS

According to Facebook itself, around 10% of Groups on the platform are communities that "quickly become the most important part of someone's experience on Facebook"

Setting up a Facebook Group allows you to:

• Share posts, photos and related content with other members.

• Create a sense of community and exclusivity.

• Notify members about upcoming events.

• Encourage people to share opinions and discuss issues.
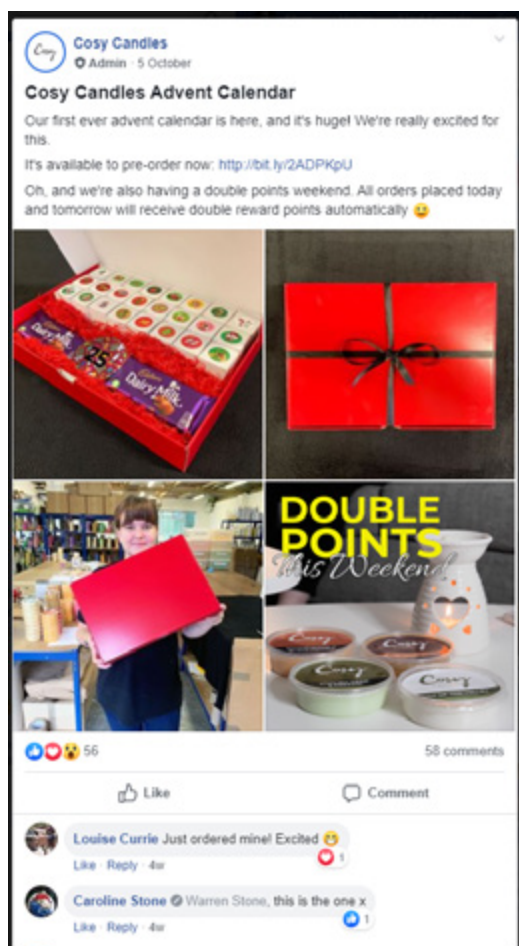
Groups also give you the chance to showcase your expertise and dedication to your customers, especially since many will be asking questions that are extremely visible to other Group members.

If you want to create a community or fanbase that is more invested than the average follower of a Page (who often can't be reached en masse without paying for an ad), creating a Group should be a serious consideration. It allows collaborative conversations, with shared links, photos and documents. No advertising is allowed, which allows a greater focus on the conversations and topics at hand. The conversation is one-to-one than the 'broadcast to all' feel of a Company Page. Group members are also notified of each activity, creating a greater sense of inclusion and encouraging a response.

To get the ball rolling, try inviting colleagues, employees, or LinkedIn connections. You could also reach out to some of the more active participants on your Facebook Page and let them know you're creating a Group you'd love them to get involved with. You can customise your invitation with a note to let people know how they can expect to benefit from participating.

For more in-depth advice on setting up and growing Facebook Groups, download our Facebook Groups Workbook.

FACEBOOK ADS

The beauty of Facebook advertising campaigns is that they can be as simple or sophisticated as you need them to be. However, the range of format choices can be daunting

Facebook offers a plethora of targeting and retargeting options so you can show your ads to a narrowly defined audience – demographic, location, behaviours, lookalike audiences and more are available.

Facebook's Ads Manager makes it easy to handle your social media advertising campaigns, with user-friendly features to help you set up your ad campaign. With a few clicks, you can run ads across Facebook, Instagram, Audience Network, and Messenger on mobile and desktop.

You can insert a tracking pixel into pages within your website to target your ideal customers with the products that they are most interested in.

Dynamic ads
Very similar to Google Shopping ads, Facebook's dynamic product ad offering is fantastic for eCommerce, allowing brands to upload a feed to Facebook to show their product ads with Photo, Carousel or Collection formats. They automatically promote the most relevant items from your product catalogue based on the person's interests, and retarget people who have shown interest on your site or app, making it a powerful tool for recapturing lost conversions.

Best for: Making sales.

Lead Gen ads
These make it easy and intuitive to give their details by mobile and desktop using pre-populated forms, and can take many forms, including quote or demo requests, newsletter subscriptions, and event registrations. These ads are great for any brand that thrives on lead generation by reducing the user journey. It also has great potential as a remarketing tool for previous non-converters.

Best for: Generating new leads.

Instant Experiences (formerly 'Canvas ads')

These are specifically targeted to mobile devices, instant experiences let you create a full-screen experience and can be added to most ad formats.


There are five templates for Instant Experiences:

1. Instant storefront - This allows you to display products in a grid to provide a 'shop window' experience; at allows you drive people to your website or app to make a purchase.

2. Instant Lookbook - Works as a kind of digital ad catalogue and allows you to demonstrate your products in action.

3. Instant Form - This provides an easy way for people to share their contact information if they are interested in learning more.

4. Instant customer acquisition - Does what it says on the tin. Useful for driving conversions and encouraging explicit call to action.

5. Instant Storytelling - These provide an engaging way of encouraging people to explore your business, then click through to your website or app.

Best for: Boosting engagement and nurturing interest and intent; driving purchases without the customer having to leave Facebook or Instagram;

Photo ads

These allow you to get your message across with engaging, high quality images imagery (photos or illustrations) and copy. You should keep copy to a minimum and let your imagery do the talking; Facebook only allows 20% of your ad to be text in any case.
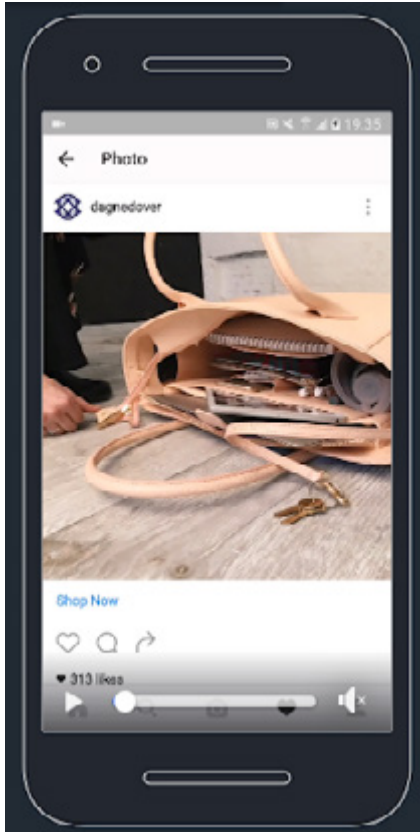
Best for: Driving unique traffic to your website. According to a Facebook experiment, a series of photo-only ads outperformed other ad formats in driving unique traffic. Raising awareness of a single, tangible item.

Top tips:

• Show people actually using your product to showcase the benefits.

• Play with different images and formats before you commit to a particular ad, and always preview how your ad will look in the wild before you run it. You can do all of this in Facebook's Creative Hub.

Video ads

More people are now consuming video than ever, with Facebook predicting that 78% of mobile data will be video by 2021. These allow you to tell a story with sight, sound and motion, and are available in a range of lengths and styles – from bite-size to feature length…

'Snackable'
Use GIFs already posted on your page, or upload directly via Ad Manager.
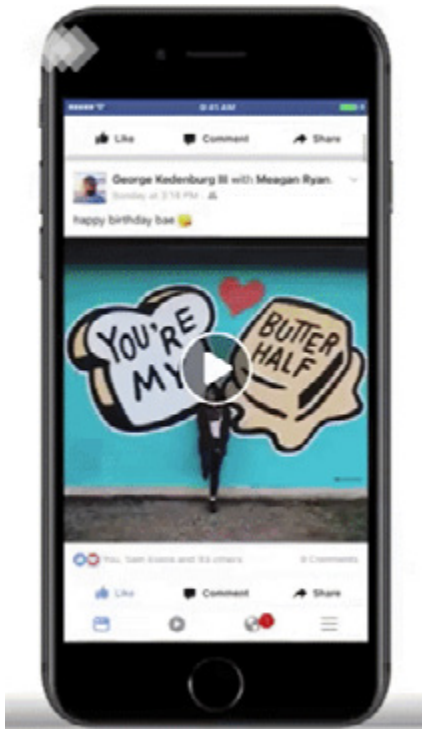
Vertical
When watching landscape videos, the viewer is often directed to look left to right. However, in a vertical format, there is no clear horizon as it shifts depending on framing. This creates an opportunity to direct people's eyes by panning up and down and utilising the height of the vertical space.

In-stream
These ads function like traditional TV commercials and aren't interactive, so there's no way to promote a landing page or click-through. However, you can link to landing pages via the Audience Network, so don't overlook the added reach and potential ROI. You can take advantage of the fact that they're non-skippable to tackle more complicated topics.

Best for: Capturing attention and making an impression.

Top tip: Don't be afraid of using humour. According to Facebook, funny videos are 70% more likely to be watched till the end that informational ones.

Carousel ads

Though particularly useful for eCommerce brands – with the option to show up to ten product images or videos, the option to link to anywhere on the web means that the ad type is useful for any brand that wants to make the most of their creative space.

You can choose to let Facebook optimise the order of the carousel images, based on each card's performance, or arrange them yourself to tell a sequential story, make sure that you opt out of the automatic optimisation feature. The interactive format encourages people to swipe through for more. Think carefully about your call to action as this should inform what your final card looks like.

Best for: Driving traffic to your brand's site through product images or storytelling; showing off multiple products; highlighting different features or details of a single product; giving people step-by-step advice on how to use your product or services.

Top tip: Make the most of the interactive element when planning your creatives. Try using interlinking images or visual cues to prompt your audience to keep swiping through the carousel cards to see the rest of your creative (as in the example above).

Collection ads

These help your audience to discover, browse and purchase products and services from their mobile device. Your an-feed ad can feature four products under a hero image or video that opens into a full-screen Instant Experience when someone interacts with your ad.

Instagram ads

Instagram ads are part of your normal Facebook targeting options. The photo and video sharing platform is ideal for brands who want to showcase their creatives, particularly if they fit within a popular category such as fitness, food, fashion or make-up. With no additional campaign creation required, this is a fantastic cross-platform opportunity for brands, with Instagram targeted as part of Facebook's ad network.

There are four formats for Instagram ads (which mirror Facebook ads): Image, Video, Carousel, Collection or Stories.
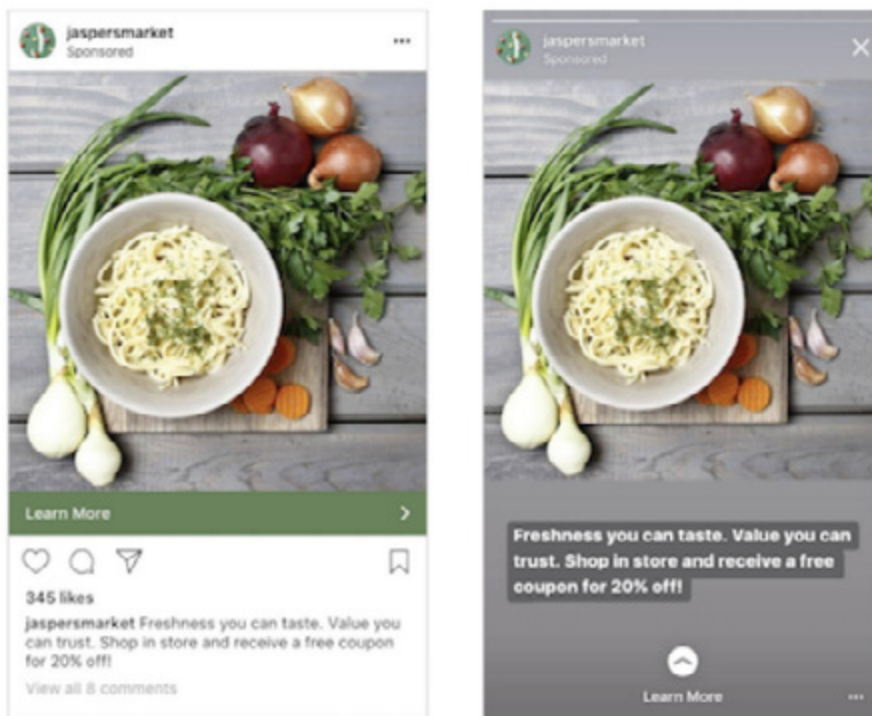
Examples of an Image ad in an Instagram feed (Left) and an Instagram Stories ad (right)

Best for: Brands that already have an Instagram following

Top tip: Many people see Instagram as a platform for inspiration and 60% say they discover new products on Instagram, so take advantage from immersive formats such as Instagram Stories, which present a big opportunity for advertisers
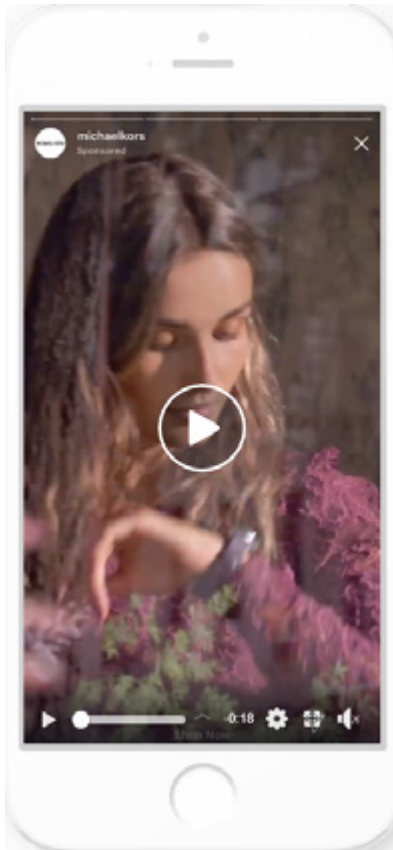
Story ads

These build on the hugely popular Facebook's native Stories feature which allows users to post content that appear at the top of the Facebook app. Brands find them useful for sharing tips and advice or introducing new products.

Best for: Creating customer interest and inspiring action - Facebook claims that 58% of people say they have become more interested in a brand or product after seeing it in Stories.

Top tip: If you already have great content on Instagram Stories, you can easily cross-share it on Facebook.

Slideshow ads

Video-like ads made of motion, sound and text made up from your existing images, Facebook describes them 'lightweight', so they can be viewed across devices and different connection speeds.

Best for: Businesses that want to showcase an array of products/services to their target audience without investing in high-quality videos.

Top tip: Plan your ad with a storyboard to decide which images to feature and in what order, to create a narrative for your ad.
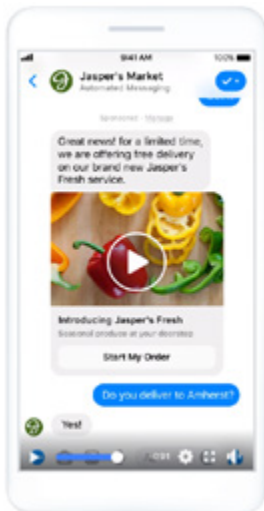
Messenger ads/Sponsored messages

Messenger ads work like ads across other Facebook platforms – they automatically deliver ads to the placement that's most likely to drive campaign results at the lowest cost. The ads appear in the Chats tab in recipients' Messenger app. When they tap on an ad, they'll be sent to a detailed view within Messenger with a call-to-action.

Best for: Starting conversations with individuals.

Top tip: Be ready to respond promptly when a customer replies to your ad.
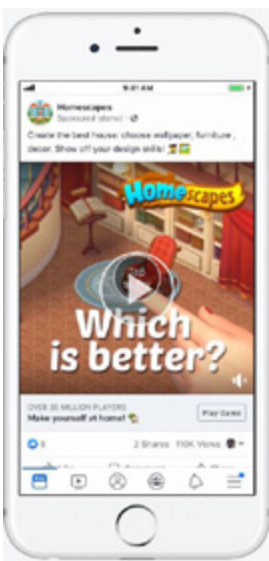
Playables

This format is aimed at mobile app advertisers to drive higher quality and higher-intent users to install their apps. They allow you to show a call-to-action throughout your demo so that people have the option to download your app at any time during the ad.

Best for: Giving potential customers an interactive try-before-you-buy preview of your app.

Top tip: Test different copy to see what encourages more people to play. Make sure you ad accurately represents your app.

FACEBOOK AD TARGETING

Facebook's ad targeting options allow you to reach people who have a relationship with your business, whether they're existing customers or people who've interacted with your business on Facebook or other platforms.

This allows you to use diverse campaigns simultaneously for different groups, rather than creating just one ad as a catch-all and which may have more reach, but less relevance to potential audiences.

Targeting options may be based on a number of factors, including:

• Ads they click on

• Pages they engage with

• Activities that people engage in on Facebook related to things such as their device usage and travel preferences

• Demographics such as age, gender and location

• The mobile device they use and the speed of their network connection

• Custom audiences

The Custom Audience option lets you find people who already know your business on Facebook.

You can use sources such as lists, engagement on Facebook or website or app traffic to create Custom Audiences:
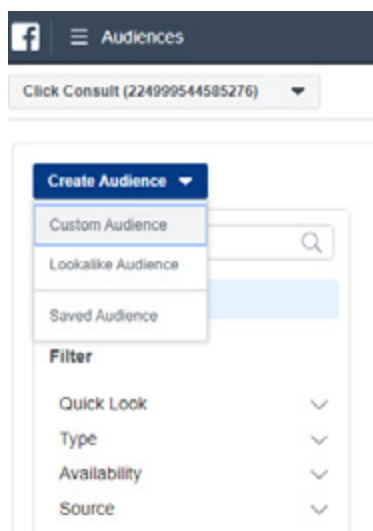

You can create up to 500 Custom Audiences per ad account.

To help further grow your audience Custom Audiences can be used to create lookalike audiences—new potential fans, followers, and customers who share key characteristics with your existing customers and fans.
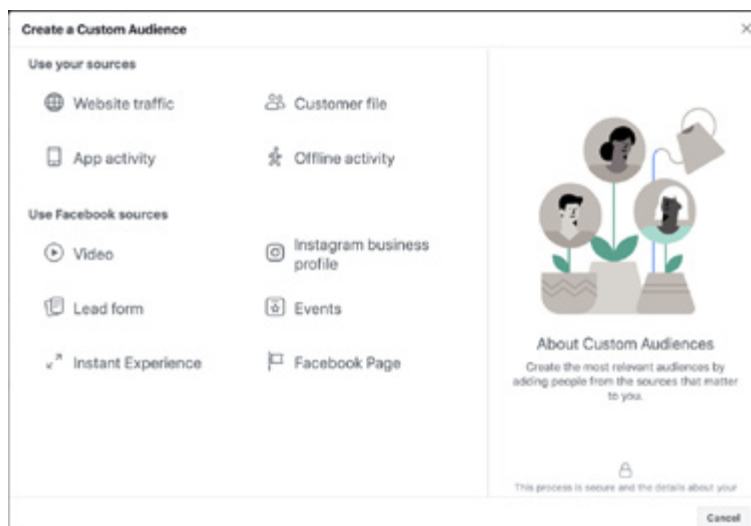
Select Audiences in the Ads Manager dropdown menu
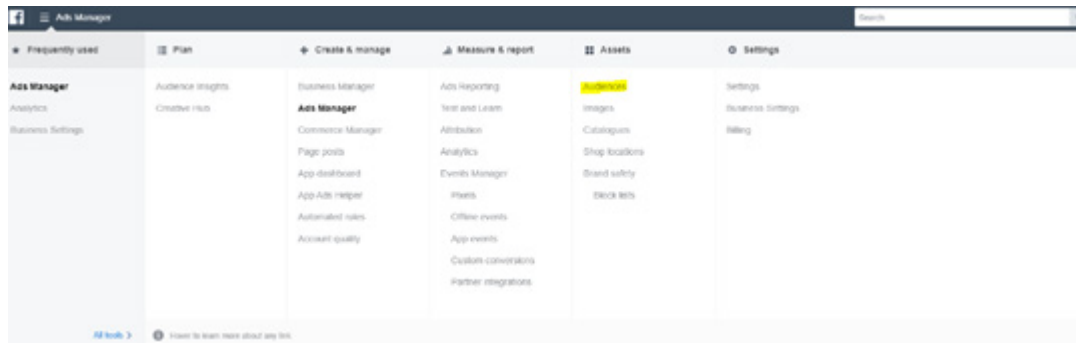
Create Audience > Custom Audience

You then have 10 options for the audience source

Types of Custom Audiences

There are many types of custom audiences, and Facebook is increasing them every day. Here's a brief description of them and how you can use them to grow your audience by reaching out to

Customer List (aka Standard) Custom Audiences

A list of emails, phone numbers, or Facebook User IDs that Facebook will match them with its users. Facebook will usually match between 60-70% of the contacts on your list. Uploading this list usually has to be done manually, unless you use a Custom Audience Sync tool.

Website Custom Audiences

Instead of users' email addresses or phone numbers, you can insert a Facebook Pixel tracking code on your website and target your Facebook Advertising to all users that have visited a specific page on your website during a set time period (up to 180 days)!

App Activity Custom Audiences

You can create audiences based on what actions people take when they use your app or game. If your business has an app associated with it, you need to be utilising custom audiences on Facebook.

Offline Activity

Conversions that happen offline, such as in a store, can be logged and then listed on a spreadsheet which is then uploaded to Facebook.

Facebook Sources – Engagement Custom Audiences

You can create audiences of those who engage with your posts, videos, events and forms on Facebook and Instagram. The duration of these audience types is up to 365 days (apart from for lead forms which is 90 days), although the more recent is often better.

Facebook Likes campaigns

Page likes - or 'promote page' - ads help you reach people who may like your Page. If your goal is to increase awareness of your business, these ads are a way to promote your Page to people who are interested in your content or businesses like yours.

To create a Page likes ad:

1. Go to your Facebook Page.

2. Select Promote. You can find it in the bottom left-hand corner of your Page.

3. Select Promote your Page.

4. Fill in the details for your ad. We'll automatically suggest text, images and other details based on your Page, but you can change these. Look for the following sections to create your ad:

5. Ad creative: Provide text and select an image or video for your ad.

6. Audience: Choose a recommended audience or create a new audience based on specific traits.

7. Daily budget: Select a recommended budget or provide a custom budget.

8. Duration: Select one of the suggested timeframes or provide a specific end date.

9. Payment method: Review your payment method. If you need to, you can change or update your payment method.

When you've finished, select Promote.

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ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named Search Agency of the Year and Digital Agency of the Year 2018, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

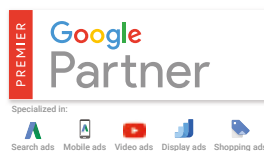## YOUR BESPOKE SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

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OUR AWARDS

SEO Agency of the Year 2019	Search Agency of the Year 2018
Most Effective Agency 2018	Digital Agency of the Year 2018

OUR TECHNOLOGIES

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