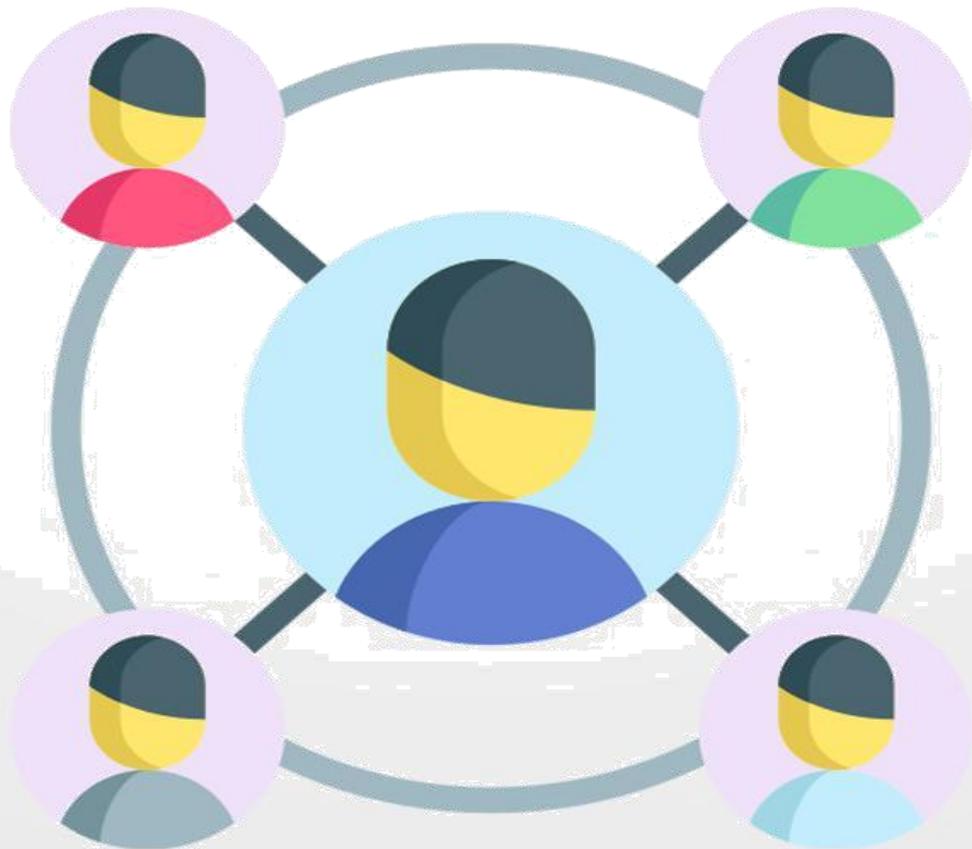


5 Secrets To Building An Engaged Facebook Group



Introduction

Smart marketers know that successful business is not about reaching the largest audience possible. Rather, successful business is about reaching the most *targeted* audience possible and building engagement.

It is FAR better to have 100 fans that read and like every post you share, than it is to have 1,000,000 followers that never actually engage with any of your content. With a product that nets you \$20 profit, the first group will likely earn you around \$200 for a promotional post, while the latter will earn you ZERO.

In the book “1,000 True Fans”, author Kevin Kelly explains that a business can succeed and even thrive as long as it has 1,000 ‘true’ fans.

What he means by this, is that if your fanbase is engaged and passionate enough, then it will be enough for you to sustain your business. They will buy enough products and services to keep you afloat, but more importantly: they will also become brand ambassadors who go out and spread the word, thereby bringing even more people to your site. Once you cross that 1,000-fan threshold, you can get big. Getting to that point is the hard part. Reaching an audience of 1 million people is easy: you just need the advertising budget. Turning 1,000 of those people into fans though is hard.

And that’s where the Facebook group comes in. Yes: Facebook groups – not pages – are your secret weapon for galvanizing your following and turning them into highly engaged fans. That’s because Facebook groups allow you

to talk to your followers directly and to create conversations. It creates a community, and it lets your audience feel as though they 'belong' to something. That way, your brand becomes part of their identity.

This is the difference between a company like Apple – that has genuinely loyal *fans* who love what it stands for – and a company like Asus. That is a good company... but... yeah. Now the next question: how do you make your Facebook group a massive success? Here are the five secrets you need to know! These are the five things that business and blog owners need to know in order to utilize this truly powerful tool and outperform their competition.

Secret #1: Exclusivity

The first secret to making a highly successful Facebook group is to make it a secret group. You will select this setting in the privacy options, and it will mean that people can't see what you've posted unless they have also joined. Why is this important? Firstly, because it makes people curious. People naturally want what they can't have, this is an in-built evolutionary aspect of our psychology, and it's something that you can use to your advantage.

Moreover, having an exclusive group makes it more appealing simply because it is less readily available. People like to think of themselves as VIP and important, and again, this comes from a strong evolutionary imperative to 'fit in'. Simply causally referring to your group as a 'VIP group', or talking about the members as your 'VIPs' can be enough to create a strong incentive for people to join up.

At the same time though, having an exclusive group – particularly early on.

Secret #2: Early Buzz

One of the easiest ways for your Facebook group to fail is for it to look overly empty. This is something that many brands fall afoul of and it can immediately turn off many of their potential members.

Imagine that you've been encouraged heavily by a brand to sign up to a Facebook group. Eventually, you relent and do so. And what do you find? Nothing! It's a big empty group where no one really posts. You post in there and there is no answer. You notice there are only three members... So, what do you do? You leave! And not only have you now left the group, but your opinion of the brand has also probably gone down a notch. Seems the brand lacks the impact to build a big following! Again, it's about social signals. And in this case, the strong social signal is: your brand stinks!

Keeping your group private will mitigate this somewhat, because it makes it seem as though you did that on purpose. But what's also important, is that the members who *are* there be as active as possible. It only takes a few highly active members for you to then gain the kind of momentum and progress that you need in order to be highly successful.

If one member shares a post, they found really interesting and writes something about it, then that will make other

members more likely to comment on it too and to share their *own* posts. This creates an exponential form of growth. So how do you create that early buzz and activity? One answer is to start by inviting your real-life friends, business partners, and colleagues. Find people that you know are highly interested in the subject matter and invite them to the group. Then simply continue the kinds of discussion you might have in the real world.

Even though there might only be three or four of you, this can create the spark that you need to act like the catalyst to get things moving – especially if this seems like ‘insider’ and ‘advanced’ content.

(As an aside, this is a very useful function for a group. While your blog and Facebook page needs to cater to people just discovering your brand and perhaps the entire topic for the first time, you can have more advanced and high-level discussions in the groups.)

If you don't have friends or colleagues willing to engage in this kind of conversation, then another option is to select your most vocal members. Find the followers and fans that post most often to your Facebook page, to your videos, to your website. These people are not only likely to be very engaged with your brand, but are also the very *types* of people that have demonstrated themselves to be communicative and proactive. This will make them great ambassadors for your site and content.

Secret #3: Name, Image, and Niche

Very important is to choose the right name, the right image, and the right niche for your group right from the start. To do that, you should spend some time really understanding your own brand and your own audience. In particular, that means making sure that you know your mission statement, and that you know your buyer persona.

A buyer persona is a fictional person that is the 'ideal customer' for whatever it is you're selling. The idea is that you can this way create a profile for the *type* of person you want to appeal to. This means understanding their age, their income levels, their hobbies and interests, their career, and where they spend their time.

This will be informed by your mission statement: the statement of intent that defines what your brand is all about. A great brand is more than just a logo: it is a commitment to a certain quality, a set of values, and a sensibility. When you buy Apple products, you know they are aimed at creatives and young professionals. You know that they will be accessible yet powerful, and you know they'll use smooth, white design.

So, if you run a sandwich shop, how is that shop different from the one next door? Who is your ideal customer? A hipster millennial?

By understanding all of this, you can then create a Facebook group that is ideally tailored to THAT audience, whoever it might be. And that will then inform your choice of

photo, group name, description, and even your specific niche.

You have a fitness brand, but is it aimed at men, women, or both? Is it about hardcore weight training, or is it about a healthy and happy lifestyle? Communicate this *strongly* through your settings.

Likewise, make sure that you aim for a small enough niche. A group for writers is good, but a group for stay-at-home-Mum-fiction-writers is even better. These Mums will share more in common with one another and therefore be likely to be more active in the group.

Secret #4: Empowering Members

One of the reasons that a lot of businesses neglect Facebook groups, is that they simply lack the time and resources to spend on yet another platform – especially on Facebook where they might already have a Facebook page or an advertising campaign.

The good news though? You can actually enlist members of the community to do the managing for you and thereby allow the group to run itself with very little input from you!

The problem with this, is that it can lead to trouble.

Facebook groups have recently come under fire for fostering antisocial views and behaviour and for promoting 'fake news'. This is something Facebook is clamping down on hard as a result, and it's important for you to prevent this from happening in your group unless you want it to stop appearing in the feeds.

To allow your group to run itself then, something you need to consider is making members of your group into administrators. This means they'll be able to allow or disallow posts (if you have set your settings to require approval) and it means they'll be able to invite new members etc.

By creating moderators in this way, you will not only have a Facebook group that can run itself, but you will also find you create even more engagement and even more avid brand ambassadors. People LOVE being made a part of their favorite brands, and it's an excellent way to make them feel more valued, as well as to give them a sense of ownership over your brand that can translate to better engagement.

In fact, this is a technique that Mussolini would use and would call 'Transformismo'. By taking someone – even a political opponent – and giving them responsibility within your organization, you can make them into your staunchest and most vocal allies and advocates!

Secret #5: Informed Consent

Finally, keep in mind that if you want to monetize your group optimally and sell to your members, then you should think about how you communicate special offers and deals. Your group should be a highly engaged and highly targeted selection of qualified leads – the ideal people to sell to. The problem is that a lot of people who sign up to groups because they want to get involved with your brand, will still not take kindly to having special deals pushed down their throats – which is essentially advertising.

The way you get around this, is by letting them know *prior* to the fact, that this is what you will be doing. Better yet, you turn the advertising and marketing into a *feature*. This way, you can get people to actually feel excited about the idea of getting special deals and promotions.

It's all about the way you sell it.

If you describe your group as being:

“A place where dedicated and passionate athletes can discuss their craft and share their advanced tips and methods. Gain access to exclusive content, rare footage, and incredible special offers!”

Then you have just made the fact that you sell products through here into a *positive* thing. People are now *expecting* you to sell to them, and in fact have signed up knowing this full well – partly *because* of that very fact! This way you can sell as much as you like and not put people off.

So, think carefully about the way you promote your product in its own description, as well as the way you sell it through other platforms such as your other social accounts and your blog. It's not just about getting people to sign up, it's about putting them in the right frame of mind to buy.