

## **Transcript: Five ways to build your Facebook audience**

Welcome to another literacy webinar, aka: Digital Masterclass, brought to you by Glen Eira City Council's Digital Enablement program.

Today's topic: five ways to build your Facebook audience and maximise your reach and engagement. That means we're going to share five super-useful tips that will help businesses get the most out of their content on their Facebook business account.

Please note that this masterclass focuses specifically on sharing content for business purposes, as distinct from paid Facebook advertising. A dedicated masterclass on Facebook advertising may follow at a later time.

By the end of this class you should have a better understanding of how to implement a Facebook content marketing strategy (in a high-level way).

You'll understand why Facebook is more than an advertising and promotional tool – it's actually a two-way channel – and you'll see why social media platforms are predominantly used on mobile devices.

You'll also understand why most video views on Facebook occur without sound (you'll actually be shocked to know how many). You'll get a better idea of what types of content tends to work best on the platform, and you'll understand why most of your followers won't actually see your content... around five percent is the norm. However, you'll also appreciate why this represents an opportunity for savvy marketers like yourself.

So, let's get started.

Facebook tip number one: it's a communications channel. That's right social, media is more than a promotional tool - it's actually a two-way communications channel. To put things in perspective, people used to interact with businesses predominantly in person.

Who remembers those days where we used to talk over the phone or via the post? Then came faxes, email and SMS. Nowadays, it's not at all unusual to interact with businesses via social media – or even a chatbot.

The two examples you see here are screen shots of real conversations with businesses via Facebook messenger. These show a conversation about reserving an order with a farmer's market vendor; and another which is placing an order with a seller at a record shop. Now, what you're seeing here is what many people find completely normal. And, the reason for that is that Facebook is a quick, easy and widely available communications channel.

So how can this help you? Is your Facebook page set up to receive messages via Messenger? Does your page direct people to a transaction or an enquiry page? And as a business owner, is your phone or tablet set up for notifications when you receive messages like this?

While you're at it, consider setting up automated Facebook Messenger greetings and messages for when you're away. Or, if a few people pose questions, have an FAQ answer ready. FAQ stands for "frequently asked questions". This is not actually that hard to set up, even for people with only a basic knowledge of Facebook. You can also find some very helpful online guides to get you started.

Facebook tip number two: assume everything is on mobile. Indeed, treat everything you post and do on social media as if it were to be seen on a mobile device.

The reason for that? Well, did you know that four in five Facebook users only use a mobile device for their app, while fewer than one in five users use both a desktop and mobile. That's important because things not only look different on mobile – mobile behaviour is also different to desktop. Mobile users spend less time on a website, and they tend to click on fewer pages. You might even say that mobile users are more easily distracted. That's probably not surprising when you consider how many people are just casually browsing something on their mobile when they're on a train. or standing in a queue.

To illustrate this point here's an example: this report shows Facebook-only traffic (only traffic that came via Facebook) to a single page on an undisclosed website. As you can see here, 75 of visitors to this page used a mobile device. Note also the lower average visit time from mobile users, and the average number of pages viewed.

Now: these metrics will vary from site to site. Some websites will indeed engage people on desktop longer than others. Nonetheless, what you're seeing here is essentially a roundabout accurate reflection of how most Facebook traffic works when it comes to websites.

Facebook tip number three – and this one might shock you – assume that most videos are watched without sound. Now, how many is “most” videos? 85 per cent. That's right: it is reliably estimated that 85 per cent of videos on Facebook are viewed with the sound off, something that, incidentally, is directly related to our previous slide, and that is the widespread adoption of mobiles. Now: consider these examples (and I invite you to click on these videos in the downloadable PowerPoint that you'll be able to see on our website) and note the differences.

The top video here is a compilation of funny marketing videos. It's amusing, but because there are no subtitles to this video, much of the poster's in-depth commentary is actually lost. There's stuff going on – or rather, we think we know what's going on – but there's actually a whole other level of commentary on these videos that we're not getting because there are no subtitles. Compare that to the bottom video that has got what are called hard-coded subtitles (subtitles loaded into the video). In this case, it doesn't matter if that video is being watched on a train or in bed: the meaning will always be visible at all times.

So, if videos are part of your Facebook content strategy, it really does pay to consider what they look like without sound. Do your videos have subtitles? Even partial subtitles (a lot of marketers will just put occasional exclamations or single statements within their videos to emphasise the point)? What it comes down to is asking yourself: how will this look to 85 percent of viewers?

Facebook tip number four: Facebook is always hungry for content. It's a prodigiously hungry beast. So feed it. In the marketing world, there's an old adage, and that is that content is king. That means, the more you feed Facebook, the more it's going to reward you... in theory at least. That's because it's not just a case of dumping content into Facebook. What's important, and what is often the hardest thing to get right, is figuring out what to feed it and then – once you've worked out what (maybe) works – getting enough of that content.

Both of these are often the most time-consuming tasks in any successful social media strategy, and one of the reasons that is so difficult to get right is that the Facebook algorithm is incredibly good at

establishing what people want to see (although some cynics might argue that it's more about what Facebook thinks people ought to see).

The complexity of the Facebook algorithm is mind blowing. It measures everything from past user interactions – so the past behaviour of people that you interact with – to time of day, to the actual words and the responses. It even measures the number and kinds of reacts (reacts are those little emoji symbols that you see on a post).

The depth and the extent of the Facebook algorithm are absolutely incredible, and of course, the secrets of the algorithm are closely guarded Facebook secrets.

The point is: a huge range of factors determine how relevant your content is to your audience.

Nonetheless as a very loose (and the emphasis is on “very”) rule of thumb, the following sort of “hierarchy” illustrates what is most likely to be seen by your audience when you post. Or rather, it illustrates what Facebook is most likely to deem important enough to show your audience.

That hierarchy looks something like this: Facebook Live. So, live stream videos tend to get the most eyeballs. That image on the left there, that is a screen shot of a Glen Eira City Council staff member doing a live stream. Live streaming is exactly what it says: it's a live recording that goes straight on to your Facebook feed.

The next most popular item, generally speaking, that gets seen comprises videos uploaded into Facebook. So, emphasis here is on a video that is physically uploaded into Facebook, as distinct from a video that is shared.

Following that are images with accompanying text; then, shared posts with accompanying text. So a post that you share and you add extra commentary to it. And then, finally shared posts without text. And now we have Facebook tip number five. This is one that hopefully won't discourage you, so bear with us.

Most followers won't see your posts. That's right, most of your followers will not see most of your activity. In fact, it is thought that this might be as low as 5.5 of your followers.

Let's hear that again: it is generally thought that of all your followers, just over five percent of them are on any given day likely to see something that you post. Now the reason for that is, as was mentioned before, it's a consequence of the Facebook algorithm. It's just the way it works and, while that may sound daunting, remember a couple of things. First of all, remember that this is the same for many traditional mediums. Back in the day, when people used to send faxes and SME texts, or do print advertising, there was no way of knowing what the response was from a print campaign, or a radio campaign, or a TV campaign. The way to measure it was (unless you had sophisticated TV ratings data, which most small businesses don't have) you would wait for the phone to ring.

Nowadays, you can pretty much instantly see what kind of response any of your content gets when you post it on Facebook. That's because you can actually see the metrics. It seems really low, but the difference between something you put out in a traditional medium, compared to something you put out on Facebook, is that Facebook lets you directly gauge your audience response. Now, admittedly there is a significant difference between inserting something 5000 times in a magazine, and sharing something to 100 followers. Obviously, it'd be difficult to compare the two. Nonetheless, Facebook lets you directly gauge that audience.

If your page happens to have thousands of followers then you're going to get a bigger response. So, while Facebook response numbers may seem low, the truth is, the level of response has probably

been much the same, no matter what medium you use. Now, let's concede one thing, and that is Facebook ultimately wants you to advertise, so they're deliberately keeping your engagement numbers low. But here's the opportunity: it's not just you that this applies to – it's everyone. Everyone has to play by the same rules. Everyone, in order to receive widespread reach and engagement, has to be good at posting content. So it's not just you who has to abide by the algorithm's rules – it's everyone.

We're talking, of course, in the context of posting content, as mentioned at the start of the presentation. Facebook advertising is a different ballgame. Nonetheless, what that means is that there is a silver lining. Getting it right means your reach is potentially limitless.

In essence Facebook, is a free tool and while, yes, it is difficult to make posts go viral without paid advertising, nonetheless, as mentioned, everyone is playing by the same rules. If you as a marketer can come up with some really savvy and catchy and clever ideas for your Facebook campaign, your reach is potentially limitless.

Thanks again for coming to this digital enablement masterclass. Here's the summary again: remember if you treat Facebook like a communications channel, rather than just advertising, you might get a better response. That's because people will use your Facebook account as a way of contacting your business.

Don't forget that most your content is going to be viewed on mobile.

And if video is going to be part of your campaign, just assume that most of it is going to be watched without the sound (85 percent, as we saw before).

Have a good idea of what content to post, and have enough of it. As mentioned, that can be one of the most time-consuming and toughest parts about posting on Facebook, but if you get it right, you can potentially reach a lot of people.

And finally: understand that the key to getting more eyeballs is to actively engage with the small proportion of followers who do see your posts. So, that's the five percent of people who are likely to see your content. If you happen to serve them really good content, that engages them, that keeps them interested, and that makes them want to interact with you online, then you are already well ahead of the curve and ahead of your competitors.