

Digital Bytes

Low to no-cost digital marketing best practices to help you grow your business

What can a Facebook group do for my business?

What

Facebook groups are a hot marketing tool these days. A group is an online hub for people to come together around a common cause, issue or activity, post photos and share related content. For small business, a group is an opportunity to foster deeper customer relationships.

Why

- > In addition to being totally free, Facebook groups typically have a higher level of engagement and therefore, posts have significantly better organic reach than regular pages.
- > A group membership can satisfy some users' social image needs. They provide a sense of exclusivity and intimacy; therefore, the relationship you build with your audience through a group is much more personal and potentially long-lasting.
- > Groups allow for two-way, personal conversations. Customers find joy in being able to share their own content, and in turn, companies often can use this content for more real and practical marketing tactics outside the group.
- > When customers join a group, they tend to be more invested in the company and what it stands for. You may even be able to identify loyal customers who could serve as brand ambassadors in future marketing efforts.
- > Groups have become a more prominent part of the Facebook experience and businesses of any size can reap the advantages of using groups

Types of groups

Private – admission by invitation and acceptance only.

- > Private groups are a great option if you're providing support or VIP – worthy content. For example, a free tech support group would only be open to verified customers.

Public Group – open to anyone

- > Private groups are an opportunity to gain exposure and build an audience. For example, if you knew your target customers enjoy reading, you might start a book club group open to anyone.

Whether private or public, groups are not for promoting your business, but rather, creating a community based on a common thread. For example:

- > Shared interests – Moms, small business, crafts, fitness
- > Passion or cause – books, pet rescue, upcycling
- > Product or category – product support, fashion styling
- > Rewards – a private group can essentially function as a loyalty program in which invited members receive special deals and offers

Tips for running a successful group

- > Group posts aren't all about original content. Curate and repurpose posts, articles and information from around the web that will be of interest to your community.
- > Don't promote your business inside the group unless you're offering a special deal. You are building a community based on a common interest under the umbrella of your brand. That alone is creating goodwill and awareness.
- > Establish guidelines in your group. It's important to give your group direction on what types of conversation are encouraged (or discouraged) in order to maintain a thriving community. It allows members to take ownership of how they can influence and encourage great community behavior.
- > Moderate your group. Set member posts so they must be approved by you, the administrator, before going public in the group. Look for inappropriate posts and delete. Respond to comments and questions from members in real time.
- > Invite neighboring businesses and experts to contribute. For example, if you have a group centered around Moms, bring in your neighboring dry cleaner to discuss removing stains or a nutritionist to discuss easy, healthy lunches for school-age children

Begin and nurture your group membership and you will end up with a *community* that is bonded by common attitudes, interests, and goals instead of an aimless, eclectic group with a variety of motivations and reasons for joining.

Additional resources

Link to Facebook's own guide to setting up groups

<https://www.facebook.com/community/getting-started-with-groups/how-to-set-up-a-facebook-group/>