FACEBOOK
For Real Estate Professionals

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What Facebook Can and Can’t Do for Your Business

For most marketers, targeting users on Facebook is like shooting in the dark, according to Marty Weintraub, CEO of aimClear and author of “Killer Facebook Ads: Master Cutting-Edge Facebook Advertising Techniques.” Weintraub states that many people waste time and energy publishing wall posts that do not direct users toward what you want them to see or do.

Facebook is not a magical solution to your marketing woes. Facebook pages are hardly novel business tools; it seems like every Realtor has one! Real estate agents have spent a lot of time trying to make sense of Facebook’s potential, and few have fully realized it. Learn from your peers’ mistakes: Not a whole lot happens when a business has no overall Facebook marketing strategy. Before you post another link to a blog post on your business’s Facebook page or create another Facebook ad, read these tips to learn how to leverage it for your business’s purposes.

Facebook Can’t Magically Target a Consumer for You

Facebook can’t magically find home buyers and sellers for you to target your ads, in order to find these people you will have to use something called “psychographic variables” to target consumers with its ads.

“Psychographic variables are any attributes connecting users’ personalities, values, attitudes, interests and lifestyles,” says Marty Weintraub.

These variables include interests (like books and movies), activities (sports and outdoor recreation) and opinions (political and religious beliefs). How would this information about users help your Facebook marketing strategy?
“Psychographic segments” are segments, or groups, of consumers assembled on the basis of a shared set of psychographic variables.

Psychographic segments go far beyond classic demographic variables like age and gender. With psychographics, you can peer into the mental model of a person in the context of a customer lifecycle. For instance, marketers have traditionally grouped people into generations (Gen X, Gen Y, and so forth). If someone wanted to market something, they had to try to sell something to millions of people lumped together, like baby boomers.

“Be aware of obvious psychographic segments that demonstrate social “intent.” For instance, you can target Facebook users for ads that are a) within a specified geographic radius, b) who are engaged to be married and c) “Like” the show “Property Virgins.” There are as many audience segments as the marketer’s guile and creativity can produce.

“Try marketing to users that like shows like in #Income Property,” says Weintraub.

With psychographics, you can reduce the amount of people you are trying to court, execute focused marketing campaigns and get better results.

Facebook isn't set up to be your personal marketing assistant. Instead, it has the tools you need to create successful ads that target highly specific segments of its 1.1 billion users.

**Facebook Can Provide Psychographics**

To obtain psychographic variables, visit your Facebook page and click links with any of the following anchor text:

- “Advertise your page”
- “Ads Manager”
- “Build Audience” in the “Admin Panel.”

Facebook puts links to its advertising section in many places so you can’t miss it.

Once you have clicked on one of those links, click “Create ads.” This gives you access to the psychographic tool. The number on the side updates to tell you how many Facebook users match the criteria you have inputted. You can select location, age, gender, education, relationship status and likes and interests, to name a few. By entering user information, you can create ads that target your desired segments of the real estate market.
Facebook Can’t Magically Create Ads for You

Creating Facebook ads takes a lot of time and effort. You need to think long and hard about which Facebook users you want to target with your ads. If you sell homes of varying styles and market them to a wide range of consumers (like retirees, first-homebuyers and people who purchase properties as investments), it is inadvisable to have your ads target all of them in the same ad.

By using psychographics, you can create many specialized ads to target each segment you sell homes to.

It is possible to customize the text and image that appear on each Facebook ad to match the consumers that are looking at them. For example, you can show an image of a condo with matching text (“Buy Boca Raton condos now!”) to older demographics interested in having smaller, more manageable living spaces.

Facebook Can Make You Look like a Brand

Now that you know about how Facebook ads work, plan on having an increased volume of traffic to your business’s page. How will all these visitors know who you are and what you do when they first land on your page? How will they remember your Facebook page long after they’ve left? One word: Branding!

Prominently display your name, logos affiliated with your businesses and any brokerage you may work with, and make sure it’s clear you sell a lot of homes.

It’s not enough to have a Facebook landing page; you need to find ways to actually get people on it. Adding Facebook Connect or a Facebook “Like” button widget to your blog will help bring people to your landing page.

Once there, they can “Like” your business.

“We believe that getting Likes is a good thing, if the Likes come from marketing blog content via your Facebook brand page. That said, make sure to have just enough fans to look like a brand, with a credible, well-designed presence,” says Weintraub.

By educating yourself about Facebook’s many resources for targeting prospective customers, you are able to create a focused marketing strategy. There are a lot of things that Facebook can’t do, but the things you can do using this social network can transform your real estate business.
As of June 2013, Facebook has more than 1.15 billion active users, many of which are involved in the real estate industry. According to Facebook, over 50% of its active users log in to Facebook on any given day. And, the average user is connected to 80 community pages, groups and events, and creates an average of 90 pieces of content each month. It’s clear that Facebook is one of the most influential and viral communication engines of our time, providing a real estate social network that every real estate agent can leverage to drive their business.

In the real estate industry, targeted and consistent communication makes the difference between market leaders and those who work hard yet achieve less-than-desirable results. Let Facebook’s real estate social network be an additional tool in your online real estate marketing toolkit that helps you communicate with clients past, present and future.

Creating a Great Facebook Profile

Just like your real estate website, you want your Facebook profile to be visually appealing, clean and uncluttered, easy to navigate, and full of information so that visitors want to stay a while and look around. Consider these tips:

1. Take control of your Timeline Cover Photo. With the rollout of Facebook’s “Timeline” feature, this is now the most eye-catching component of your Facebook page. 850 pixels by 315 pixels is the ideal size for your cover photo. Your photo should avoid promotions, text-heavy pictures, and reflect how you want to appear in your real estate social network.
2. **Use your entire profile picture space.** The ideal dimensions for your profile picture are 180 pixels by 180 pixels. Most businesses place their logo here.

3. **Create customized tabs.** Figure out the two most relevant tabs that you would like to share on your homepage. Facebook allows users to create more than two tabs for their pages, but only the first two will be shown without users clicking on anything.

4. **Identify your milestones.** Another feature of the Facebook layout are “milestones,” which allows you to go back in time on your profile and mark significant events or moments for your business. Great example milestones are: The day your business was founded, the day a major goal was hit (e.g., selling 100 homes in a year), and the start date of a new employee.

5. **Start pinning.** Pinning isn’t just for Pinterest anymore. Another great feature to your Facebook profile is the ability to keep an announcement or important story at the top of your timeline for up to a week.

6. **Be interactive.** Create a dialogue and provide useful information to your visitors and they will keep coming back to your business’s Facebook page. Look to create conversations with past clients, current clients, and prospects. Respond to questions, comments, and complaints in a helpful and professional manner.

7. **Mix up your posting.** If your page is too “salesy,” you’ll lose followers. For every marketing or branding-type post, there should be three or four posts not focused on you. Mix in posts meant to create conversion and position you as an expert. Don’t forget to tag other brands and experts related to the content of your posts. Linking your posts to other pages in this way increases their visibility and makes your posting seem less one-sided.
8. Ask for “Likes.” Anyone that “likes” your business’s Facebook page will see its posts in their news feed. Ask visitors for “likes” to expand your page’s reach! (Of course, don’t overdo it; no one wants to be inundated with requests to like a business’s Facebook page.)

9. Promote your posts. The way that Facebook decides what shows up on a user’s news feed organically is complex. It’s possible to pay Facebook and ensure your posts show up in your fans and friends of fans’ news feeds. This is called “promoting a post.” It is a waste of money to promote all your posts, so focus on a few that are likely to get a good response.

**Optimize Your Facebook Profile**

Creating a great Facebook page is just the beginning in building your real estate social network. Next, you’ll want to optimize your page, find the right tools to increase your web traffic, and create a real estate social network that works for you. Then, start watching the leads roll in!

Most agents understandably focus on driving traffic to their real estate website. But what about increasing visitors to their Facebook pages? Sure, Facebook pages can attract a ton of traffic on their own. Your posts can be viewed by your fans’ friends if they “Share” your posts (and their friends’ friends if they share your posts, too). But how can you utilize Google and other search engines to drive traffic to your Facebook page?

The first step is to unlock all of your Facebook page’s privacy settings. Google and other search engines will index your page, making it possible to find in their search results. Of course, getting your page to rank high in those search engines for your desired keywords is not guaranteed. That’s the tricky part!

Here’s how you can optimize a Facebook page for search engine visibility:

1. **Choose your page’s name carefully.** Be sure to pick a hyper-local focus for your Facebook page’s name. You might cover an entire city, but choosing one area you know really well is a better bet to increasing the organic search traffic it receives. Competition for hyper-local keywords is much lower than city, state, or metro real estate keywords. For example, www.facebook.com/SeattleQueenAnneHill is a hyper-local Facebook page that would likely rank well in Google for searches for real estate in Seattle’s beautiful Queen Anne neighborhood.
2. **Choose a short, market-specific URL.** Your Facebook page’s URL should be short and contain hyper-local keywords for the areas you are targeting. Lengthy URLs that cover many different cities, suburbs, or neighborhoods will dilute your Facebook page’s focus and decrease the likeliness that it will show up in search engine result pages.

3. **Increase social interaction.** One of the many factors Google and other search engines take into consideration when determining where pages should be placed in their search results is the level of social media interaction those pages receive. Your Facebook page will rank higher than another, similar page if it receives more “likes” (for the page itself and for posts), comments and shares.

4. **Include photo albums on your Facebook page.** Not only do users tend to engage with great photos, but Facebook ranks engaging with photos higher than engaging with text. The more engagement your page has, the more your posts become visible to Facebook users who liked your page. Make sure to regularly upload images and give them descriptive captions that contain your hyper local keyword phrases and update regularly. Posting or even just sharing very unique photos is a great way to increase engagement on your Facebook page.

5. **Don’t forget the “About” section.** Completely fill out the “About” section of your profile, using hyper-local keyword phrases when appropriate. This section gives you the chance to describe all the areas you serve – an excellent opportunity to insert geographic keywords.
Is Facebook Advertising Worthwhile for Agents?

Social media marketing – isn’t that an oxymoron? Most real estate marketing consultants caution agents not to overly market themselves and their listings, to the exclusion of social posts, and they’re probably right.

Facebook advertising, however, doesn’t happen on your business page, it occurs on everyone else’s Facebook pages. Well, not everyone’s, but we’ll get to that in a minute.

Is Facebook advertising worthwhile for agents? It depends. There are several variables that go into a winning Facebook ad. Miss even one of them and your ad won’t get traction. Nail them all, on the other hand, and you may be as happy as Joshua Hunt, owner/broker of Trelora in Denver, Colo.

“Wow! It’s impressive,” he says of Facebook’s pay-per-click (PPC) advertising platform. “Most of our actual business – 70 percent of it – is coming from pay-per-click on Facebook.”

He went on to tell us that most of the company’s Facebook-derived clients set appointments with his agents within 48 hours of initial contact. Now that’s something worth paying attention to.
How it Works

Next time you’re on your Facebook page, look over to the right and you’ll see the ads. These ads are targeted to you according to the information in your Facebook profile. This includes:

- Your age.
- Where you live.
- Your level of education.
- Relationship status.
- Interests.

Once you determine your advertising goals, you can target who sees your ad. Let’s look at an example of how this works.

Jenny, an Iraq war veteran, is now a real estate agent in Fayetteville, N.C. She wants to attract buyers to her veteran-focused real estate practice. First, she would determine the age range of her potential clients, perhaps those aged 25 to 50.

Then she would narrow the target range even further to those living in and around Fayetteville. From there, she can drill down to target folks who identify themselves as veterans, members of the military, and even veteran’s spouses. We’ll take a look at how this is done a little later on.

Finally, there are two ways to pay for your Facebook ads: Cost-per-click (CPC) or per thousand impressions (CPM). With cost-per-click, you are charged every time a person clicks on your ad. For Facebook that means you pay either when someone clicks to go to your website, Facebook page, or likes your ad. With CPM, you pay a pre-determined amount for every thousand times your ad is viewed – even if no one clicks on it!

Develop Your Strategy

First, you’ll need to come up with your advertising strategy, and your initial step is to determine a goal with Facebook advertising. Most agents understand their current, most pressing need, be it creating brand awareness, getting visitors to their blogs, getting buyers or listings, or building
the pipeline of future business.

Once you understand your goal, it's time to figure out where to drive Facebook traffic. Rebekah Radice, manager of industry engagement with Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate suggests choosing from the following ideas:

- Your IDX website.
- Your blog.
- A landing page.
- Your Facebook business page.

Naturally, which of these is the best choice varies, depending on the social media strategist you ask. Many of them will tell you to never drive the traffic to your IDX website because the more hoops you make people jump through, the less likely you are to capture the lead. Clean and easy to read targeted landing pages are the best.

Keywords

Facebook ad keywords aren't like Google keywords. Instead of search terms, you'll need to determine keywords that other Facebook users – the ones you are targeting – use to describe themselves and their interests.

Let’s use Jenny, the veteran and real estate agent we met earlier, as an example.

In the “Choose your Audience” area of Facebook’s ad creation tool, we entered “veteran” into the “Precise Interests” box. Facebook generated a list of related keywords, such as military,
soldier, Vietnam veteran or Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Some of the results even listed the number of people in the keyword’s audience. “Soldier,” for instance, has an audience of 9,800,000.

From these results, you can choose the keywords you’ll use in your ads.

Create Your Facebook Ad

Since the photo you use will bring in 85 percent of your clicks, choosing the right one for your ad is the most strategic move you can make. First, the photo reinforces what is said in the copy. More important, however, is that it draws the eye to the ad.

Remember, folks aren’t perusing Facebook for something to purchase – they are there to interact with people they know. Choose an enticing photo to grab their attention.

Once you’ve got their attention, get them to click with a robust call to action. “Sign up for my free newsletter” isn’t robust, by the way. A free e-book, a webinar, or, for Jenny, our veteran, it might be “How to Buy a Home with Nothing Down!”

Lead Capture

All of this work, and the payments for the clicks, will fall flat if the leads don’t land on a site that will capture them.

Ensure that the page they land on:

- Shows the visitors exactly what you promised them they would see.
- Makes the visitor feel informed and secure.
- Looks clean and professional.
- Is optimized for user satisfaction, not SEO.
- Is all about the user, not you.
- Includes your contact information; this helps build trust.

Like any marketing effort, Facebook ads require monitoring, tracking and tweaking. With the right strategy, however, they can be a lucrative way to bring in new clients.
Increase Your Website Traffic with a “Share on Facebook” Button

Facebook makes it easy for agents and brokers to share real estate information with buyers and sellers. They, in turn, pass this on to their friends via Facebook. This is free marketing for you, but only if you make it easy for yourself—and your website—to be found.

Make it easy for visitors to your website to share listings and other content via Facebook. The best way to do this is to add a “Share on Facebook” button on your website, especially on the listing pages.

Agents using Market Leader can post listings to their Facebook page directly from their Market Leader System. Market Leader’s IDX-enabled websites have a “Share on Facebook” button on their listings that enable your website visitors to share the homes they have found.

Make your network work for you

In many cases, your buyers and sellers will do the job of sharing your listings for you! Consider the following common scenarios:
Scenario 1:

A potential buyer is interested in a house and wants the opinion of their friends. By posting the link on their Facebook profile, the buyer indirectly acts as YOUR promotional agent, garnering additional leads with no investment of time or money on your part, as the potential buyer posts the link out to their Facebook friends.

Here’s how this scenario would play out:

First, a potential buyer finds a house listed on the agent’s website and clicks “Share on Facebook.”

If the potential buyer is already signed into Facebook, a dialogue box is displayed where they can scroll through thumbnails and select the desired picture to post on their Facebook page

Agent’s View:

![Image of a house listing with a thumbs up icon]

Next, the potential buyer adds a comment to accompany the post, such as “Check out this house I am thinking about buying. What do you think about it and the neighborhood?”

Facebook Posting:

![Image of a Facebook post with a thumbs up icon]

Once the question and listing are posted on the potential buyer’s Facebook page, their friends can view it and share it with others. Facebook users who click the post to view the listing details are taken straight to the listing on the agent’s website. As the link is distributed to networks of friends, the number of potential leads it can generate on your website grows exponentially.
Scenario 2:

Home sellers can utilize their social network to their—and your—best advantage. Sellers’ friends can help find buyers by sharing their home via Facebook; any interest they drum up will view the listing on YOUR site. It’s like having a fleet of buyer agents working for you—for FREE!

Here’s how this scenario would play out:

First, the seller locates their home’s listing on your website and clicks “Share on Facebook”

If they are already signed into Facebook, a dialogue box will prompt them to scroll through thumbnails and select the desired picture to post on their Facebook page.

Next, the seller adds a comment for their social network, such as “My house is now on the market! Help me get the word out.”

Once this is posted to Facebook and one of the seller’s friends clicks on the link, they are taken to the listing on your site.

Whether you are currently using Facebook or are a broker or agent exploring social media marketing on your own, placing the “Share on Facebook” widget on your website is a powerful, convenient, and economical choice for generating leads, expanding your brand, and ensuring success.
How to Create a Facebook Business Page

Setting up a Facebook business page for your real estate business is easy with this step-by-step process.

Create a Business Page

2. Click the green “Create Page” button found in the upper right hand corner of the page.
3. Choose “Local Business or Place”
Local Business or Place Set Up

4. Select Real Estate as the page category.
5. Choose a name that aligns with your strategy (brand or hyper-Local).
6. Enter your business address and phone number.

Section 1: About

7. Add a description that describes you to your target market.
8. Add your website’s URL.
9. Choose a unique Facebook web address that is easy to remember for your fans and contains hyper-local keywords for the neighborhoods you serve.
10. Select Yes for the question that asks if your business is “a real establishment, business or venue.”
11. Select Yes for the question that asks if your business page will be the “authorized and official representation of this establishment, business or venue on Facebook.”

Section 2: Profile Picture

12. Upload a professional-looking headshot or logo for your business page.
Section 3: Add to Favorites

13. Clicking the green “Add to Favorites” button will add your business page to your Facebook sidebar and make it easier to find and see updates about it.
**Section 4: Claim**

14. This step allows you to claim an existing Facebook page for your business. You will most likely skip this step.

**Section 5: Reach More People**

15. The “Reach More people” step takes you to a page where you can create Facebook ads for your business. Skip this step for now and finish setting up your Facebook page first; you can create ads later.
Tips for an Effective Business Page

So you have created a business page - now what? How can you turn your blank slate of a page into an effective part of your business’s marketing strategy? Below are 13 tips to improve interaction and increase total fans of your business page.

Stay Active - Be active and engage with your fans to keep your Facebook page's momentum going. Post at least once per day to stay “top of mind” with your fans.

Have a Voice - Don’t use auto-posters that cross post between your social media accounts, you will end up sounding like a robot and losing your voice as well as fans. Instead, post appropriately for each social media account you’re using. For example, if you’ve just posted a blog, write a comment on Facebook with a link to your blog.

Drive Traffic - Give people a reason to go to your website, and include a link back to your website. Send people to the topic you’re telling them they’ll see. For example, if you’re telling people they’ll see local home price information; don’t send them to a listing page for homes for sale send the visitors to a page that display’s local home prices.

Listen - This is perhaps the most important rule for Facebook page admins – you must listen and respond to your fans’ comments and questions. When you’re posting a comment or post, focus on “what in it for your fans.” Focus on your fans’ needs, concerns and interests.
Increase Your Edge Rank - Your “edge rank” determines how frequently your posts show up in your fans’ news feeds. You can increase your edge rank by posting photos and videos that people are more likely to see and interact with.

Get People to “LIKE” Your Page! - Ask for support from your personal contacts and sphere of influence. Use contests, events and the call to action of “liking” your page.

Add Photos- Photos are Facebook gold. Update your timeline cover and profile picture. Post pictures of your market and include your hyper-local target area in photo file names, albums titles and captions.

Best Time to Post – 8-9am & 7-8 pm is the most popular time of day for people to interact and share on Facebook.

Like Other Businesses – Like businesses who …

- You refer to in your posts.
- You receive referrals from.
- Post good content you want to repost.

Keep Visitors Coming Back! – Make your page worth following. Here’s how you can keep your followers interested:

- Post about comment-worthy topics!
- Include polls or feedback quizzes.
- Mention other users in comments and keep the conversation going if they respond.
- Create and invite other users to events.
- Share photos and ask fans to do the same with you.

Create Tabs and Forms – These are advanced features that make Facebook pages more engaging. Here are sites we recommend to create tabs and forms:

- Pagemodo.com.
- Tabsite.com.
- Shortstack.com.
- Jotform.com.
Use Insights — At the top of your business page, in the “Admin” section, there is a button for the “Insights” section. This section gives you valuable information about how your posts are performing, how many and where your new likes are coming from, and if you are losing your audience through “unlikes.”
Send a “Friend Request” to Your Leads

It can get hard to stay in touch with your leads, especially if they are not looking to buy or sell right away. If a lead is not ready to get serious about buying or selling a home, they might not readily respond via email or phone. One way to consider getting in touch with your leads is a Facebook “friend request.”

Tyler Hagerla, Broker Associate of Keller Williams Realty in Carlsbad, Calif. has found success with this method. He shared his Facebook friend request templates and methods.

How to use friend requests for lead outreach:

- **Step 1**: A lead signs up on your website with at least their name and email address.
- **Step 2**: Search for the lead on Facebook using their name and email address.
- **Step 3**: Click the grey “Add as Friend” button in the bottom right-hand side of their cover photo and include a short message like the ones below.

Messages for leads that Signed Up on Your Website

Hi (Contact Name), feel free to follow me on Facebook and continue to check out my website, [www.YOURWEBSITE.com](http://www.YOURWEBSITE.com).

Hi (Contact Name), you recently signed up for my website ([www.YOURWEBSITE.com](http://www.YOURWEBSITE.com)). Feel free to follow me on Facebook and if you have any questions about the site I would love to help. You can reach me at 555-555-5555 [your number]. Have a great day!

You recently signed up on my website. I don’t want to bombard you with emails so you can follow me on Facebook instead. Let me know how I can help with your home search :).
Hi (Contact Name), Thanks for checking out my website. I notice we have some mutual friends-that’s pretty cool. Fill me in on your current situation, so I can find the right place for you.

**Messages for Other Leads**

What types of messages do you send to leads that haven’t signed up on your website? Here are some templates for when you reach out to those leads.

Hi (Contact Name), Feel free to follow me on Facebook. I sent you an email with my website URL. Check it out so we can find you a great deal!

Hi (Contact Name), it was great meeting you at [event name] I notice we have some mutual friends-that’s pretty cool. Fill me in on your current situation, so I can find the right place for you.

You recently signed up on [other real estate site]. I don’t want to bombard you with emails so you can follow me on Facebook instead. Let me know how I can help with your home search :).