Engaging with the public on Facebook
Engage your public on Facebook

Facebook helps government agencies reach the people who matter to them and accomplish their goals.

On a Facebook Page, you can connect with core supporters to drive awareness of your initiatives, promote your program and drive responses when you need them.

- Keep the public updated about news and information in your agency. It will maximise your impact when you have a big announcement to share.
- Activate people when you need them to respond. Facebook has a complete set of direct response marketing solutions to help you get people to respond to a new initiative, to attend an event or be informed of a new campaign.
- Help people understand your work. Let people know what the government is doing to represent their interests.
- Listen to the public. Facebook isn’t just a broadcast medium, it’s important to use it to listen to what your fans are saying and to engage with them.

Facebook Statistics:
- 1.49 Billion Global Monthly Active Users
- 1.314 Billion Global Monthly Active Users on Mobile
- 968 Million Global Daily Active Users
Share What Matters

Every day on Facebook, people connect with causes that matter to them. To engage your supporters, create a page and start posting content that they will like and share.

How the Newsfeed works

The goal of News Feed is to show you the content that matters to you. This means we need to give the people who use Facebook the right mix of updates from friends and public figures, publishers, businesses and community organizations they are connected to. This balance is different for everyone depending on what people are most interested in learning about every day. As more people and pages are sharing more content, we need to keep improving News Feed to get this balance right.

There are thousands of factors that the algorithm takes into account when deciding whether or not to show your content to a fan. But five things taken into consideration are:

- Has the fan recently engaged with your page in the last few days? That's why it's important to post regularly.
- How much engagement is the post getting overall?
- How much engagement has the page gotten over time?
- What type of post is it? Some people prefer clicking on links vs watching videos. It's important to mix up the types of content you are posting.
- Is the topic of the post timely and relevant?

The bottom line is that your Page strategy should still stay the same: produce high quality content and optimize for engagement and reach.

To stay up to date on the latest Newsfeed updates visit our newsroom at newsroom.fb.com

Post regularly to your Page

- Schedule content to be shared at prime times of the day (9pm to 10pm is when many people are on Facebook)
- Develop a content calendar to post consistently

Be authentic on Facebook

- Share candid, behind the scenes photos and videos
- Show examples of how you are working with and for your constituents to get things done
- Break news or give your supporters a chance to take action
Engage with your audience: Build Meaningful & Lasting Relationships

- Your fans are a community of supporters. You should join the conversation to engage them on the topics that matter to you.
- Host a Q&A to have a conversation between you and your fans.
- Post photos throughout an important day using the hashtag #DayInTheLife.
- Use ranked comments to surface your responses to fans to the top of the discussion.

Respond to comments on your Page honestly and fairly

- Include a comments policy in the About section of your Page to foster a constructive discourse.
- Responses from an admin to individual comments builds trust over time and show that you are listening.
- Learn what content is and is not allowed on Facebook by reviewing Facebook's Community Standards.

Upload videos directly to Facebook

- Short, direct to camera videos work best.
- Videos don't always have to be highly produced. Can just be from your phone.
- Take advantage of auto play by putting your best content at the beginning.
- Use the call to action at the end to drive people to your website or other videos.
Join the public conversation

- Use #hashtags to drive discussion within your community of fans
- Follow the issues and topics that are trending to post relevant content

Facebook posts about important holidays and events

- Look for public holidays, community events, or sporting events coming up
- Plan a personal post that allows you to connect with constituents around these joint experiences

Post both local and national content

- Make sure to post local content when you can, either about local issues, local businesses, local achievements or local events.
- When you do visit a local business or organization make sure to also tag them in your posts.
- Balance this with resharing content from the Facebook Pages of the party or your leadership team, with a local commentary by you.
  - Resharing national content, rather than creating a fresh post, will help the message reach the maximum number of fans organically.
- Ask people to follow you on Facebook
  - Mention in speeches or in op-eds that people can follow you on Facebook
  - Use a Facebook plug-in on your website to let people know they can like you on Facebook

In 2011, the word "CENSUS" was the 3rd most mentioned topic on Facebook.
Reach the People Who Matter to You

Insights and advertising will help you reach the people who matter to your campaign and inform your creative decisions with actionable metrics.

Measure your success with Page Insights
- See metrics such as reach and engagement about the performance of your Page
- Learn which posts resonate with your audience, as well as their key demographics
- Optimize how you publish to reach more people

Target advertising to reach the people you want to reach
- Demographic factors such as age, gender, location and more help you narrow your audience
- Use your existing contact list to target custom or look-a-like audiences
- Reach core campaign constituencies with tailored messages

Optimize your advertisements
- Facebook advertisements are optimized for your goals, such clicks to your website or impressions on your content
- Test creative such as copy or images to see what resonates with your audience
- Use conversion pixels to help measure the granular results of the actions people take on your website when they engage with a Facebook ad
- Target fans locally by using post code targeting

THE AVERAGE ONLINE REACH FOR A NARROWLY TARGETED CAMPAIGN

89% FACEBOOK
38% INDUSTRY

1 Source: Nielson OCR, August 2013
Common Mistakes

Keep these top things to avoid in mind when posting and planning your engagement.

- **Linking content from other social media**: Although linking your other social media accounts to your Facebook presence may feel like it saves time, it reduces your impact on Facebook. Your fans can tell that you are not being authentic and personally engaging with their comments. And most of the 193 million Americans who regularly use Facebook each month, do not understand what hashtags and @symbols mean. Taking the time to repost in natural language will significantly increase your reach and engagement on Facebook.

- **Forgetting to interact with fans**: Social media allows people to share and connect by interacting with each other. Try to make time to respond to direct questions posted on your Facebook Page, and to read both the comments and check out your Page Insights so that you can post more content that is relevant to the feedback you receive via your Facebook fans.

- **Infrequent Posting**: Posting five to seven times a week will help keep your Page relevant and interesting to your fans and their networks. Posting infrequently will result in less reach and engagement.

- **Appearing too professional or commercial**: As a politician, you are a professional. However, social media allows you to tell more sides to your story. Try to provide some behind-the-scenes and personal posts to balance out the strongly political and polished messages.

- **Posting press releases**: Don't post pictures of your press releases or the full text of a release. Instead just post what your quote is and how you'd say it to someone you were talking to in person.

- **Posting links without context**: People are more likely to click on a link you post if you provide some context and commentary about why you find that article interesting and wanted to share it.

- **Enabling age or country restrictions**: Be careful about restricting who can see your page in any way because by doing so your page won't be eligible to appear in other search engines.
Useful tools

Facebook's global communications platform contains many tools to help you connect, share and get the latest information as quickly as possible.

- **Optimise your site for sharing**: To drive powerful word of mouth traffic to your website and help grow your Facebook fan base, you can invite visitors to like your Facebook Page directly from your site. You can also invite them to share content from your website back on to Facebook to help spread your message. Follow this simple checklist: https://developers.facebook.com/docs/plugins/checklist to make sure your website is optimised for connecting sharing on Facebook.

- **Direct Notifications**: If there are other Pages on Facebook that you would like to receive updates about any new posts they make, you can turn on notifications for that Page. When you click “Like” on a Page, click again to choose the option to receive notifications every time they post.

- **Tagging a Page**: If you are visiting a local business in your electorate or hosting a joint event with a colleague, you can tag the Page. This increases the likelihood that your post is reshared by those that you tag and helps drive traffic to both your and their Page. To tag a person or Page, type the ”@” symbol and then start typing their name. Pick the person or Page you want to tag from the dropdown menu that appears.

- **Pages to Watch**: Compare Performance: If at least 100 people like your Page, you can use the “Pages to Watch” feature to see, each week, the total number of people who like those Pages, the Percentage increase or decrease of people who like the Page, the number of times the Page posted and the amount of engagement the Page received.

- **Update Facebook on the go**: If you're a candidate use our mentions app to update your site and engage with fans. Learn more: https://www.facebook.com/mentions. If you're a campaign or political party download our pages manager app.

- **Embed Facebook posts and video on your website**: Once you discover a public post to embed on Facebook, you can add it to your website by following the steps below.
  - Click the drop down that appears at the top right corner of the post you want to embed.
  - Select “Embed Post” or "Embed Video" and copy and paste the code directly on your story page.
What is a Facebook Q&A

- A Facebook Q&A is an easy way for you to engage with your audience directly from your Page.
- Your audience will ask you questions in the comments below your Q&A post.
- Questions that you answer will appear higher in the comments so your audience knows you're listening.
- Automatic comment scrolling also ensures that you never miss your audience's questions.

How to prepare for a Q&A

- Consider how you will staff a Q&A. Sometimes it's just one person or sometimes you want more help. Think through if you'll want someone to monitor comments, another to choose questions and another person to help answer questions.
- Establish any approval process for answers ahead of time
- Do a prep meeting so everyone knows what will happen once the Q&A is started

How to start a Facebook Q&A

- Pick a Time. You can host a Facebook Q&A anytime on your Facebook Page. There is no perfect time to set one up though most people are on Facebook later at night. To get started, just click the Q&A icon in the share menu at the top of your Timeline and then click “Start a Q&A” from the dropdown menu.
- Start the conversation. Announce that you're starting a Q&A and add a photo to personalize your message. You can also call for questions on a specific topic or leave the Q&A completely open for your audience to ask anything.

Answer questions!

- Audience questions will appear in the comments below your Q&A post.
- To answer questions, simply reply to the audience comments.
- Answer as many or as few questions that you like—the duration and pace of the Q&A is totally up to you.
- You can also call for questions on a specific topic or leave the Q&A completely open for your audience to ask anything.
Q&A Guide (cont.)

Moderate your Facebook Q&A

- Page admins are able to moderate Q&As just like any other post on Facebook and they can remove comments or ban participants.
- Have some staff whose job it is to just moderate comments, others who are choosing questions and others who are helping to draft answers.

Best Practices for a Facebook Q&A

- Schedule a time to host the Q&A and promote it in advance to generate interest.
- Make sure to start on time so you don't keep your audience waiting.
- Take a photo sitting at a computer with your Facebook Page on-screen to personalize your Q&A post.
- Answer questions authentically during the Q&A by replying directly to specific questions.
- Be personable, forthcoming and most importantly, have fun.