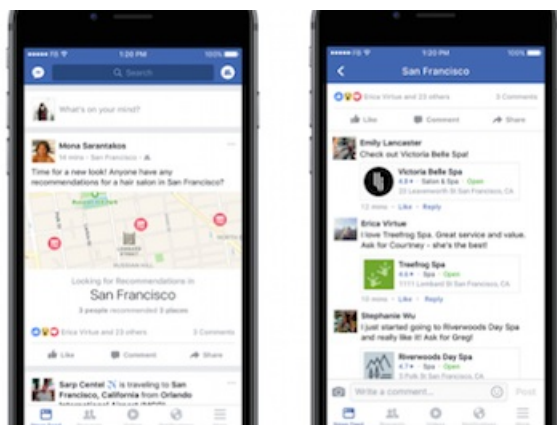


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## Facebook Pages converts into purchasing platform, but further threatens big business

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*Facebook Pages now has a host of new features*

By **Danny Parisi** for **Mobile Commerce Daily**

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Facebook is announcing a host of new ways for consumers to interact with brands and businesses through the Facebook mobile application, some of which will be a considerable boost to small businesses without a large digital marketing budget.

The main features include new ways for customers to order, purchase or research purchases from a business directly through the Facebook app. For businesses of all sizes, the ubiquitous popularity of Facebook means that these new features will make interactions between brands and consumers on both ends a bit simpler.

"Facebook has become a pervasive part of many consumers' lives. According to a recent study, more than 50 percent of U.S. adults are on Facebook at least once a month," said David Naumann, vice president of marketing at **BRP**. "Since most consumers are familiar with Facebook and many are using it on a daily basis, making retail services and products available without leaving Facebook is an added convenience.

"For businesses, Facebook represents an easy way to promote new services to their followers right on Facebook. When companies promote these offerings via other marketing mediums, they can channel people to their company Facebook page which will inspire more consumers to like their company page."

### New functionality

Along with a few other features designed to add more functionality to Facebook Pages, the social network has announced that users can now make a variety of actions related to commerce directly through a brand's Facebook page.

For example, users can order food from a restaurant's page, set an appointment from a spa's page, buy a ticket from a concert venue's page or get a quote from a seller of big ticket items, such as a car dealership.

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*The new Facebook Pages functionality could be a boon for small businesses*

All of these actions can now be done straight from a brand's Facebook page, eliminating the need for consumers to navigate through a few extra screens from a brand's Facebook page to a commerce-enabled location, such as a mobile Web site.

Bringing the commerce process into the social setting of Facebook that users are comfortable with offers an opportunity for brands and consumers to interact in a natural, seamless way that does not distinguish between the social and commercial aspects.

"As retailers look for new ways to interact and engage with their customers, social media platforms are a perfect vehicle, as they are built on the premise of interaction and dialog," Mr. Naumann said. "While retailers don't need to participate in every social media platform, they need to be active on the platforms where most of their customers and prospects are active."

"Facebook is leading the charge with these new features, but I expect to see similar offerings on other social media platforms coming soon."

Small business boost

While this news might not be the biggest revelation for larger brands who already have their own mobile apps or have integrated with Facebook in other ways, this kind of built-in connectivity could provide a window for smaller businesses who lack the digital marketing budgets of their larger counterparts to make a mobile connection with their customers.

cta-all-phone2

*Users can now make purchases directly through the Facebook app*

As mobile becomes the premiere channel for interacting with consumers digitally, any boost that smaller brands can get to their digital and mobile presence, especially when it comes to commerce where such functionality can be more expensive, the tighter connection offered by Facebook could help them stay afloat in the modern climate.

"American consumers now spend more of their Internet time on mobile devices than on desktops or laptops; therefore, it is imperative that businesses make their offerings mobile friendly," Mr. Naumann said. "For small businesses that can't afford to develop their own mobile app, leveraging Facebook's new features is a cost effective option."

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