

MARKETING

Is your Facebook strategy obsolete?

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While brands know their way around Instagram and take advantage of the many features available, there seems to be a much bigger struggle when it comes to Facebook. Image credit: Unsplash

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When Facebook decided to update its algorithm two years ago, its intention was to strengthen meaningful interactions by favoring content from friends and family. However, its decision to do so meant that brands had to work harder to develop a content strategy that stood out.

As a result, many brands are struggling to deliver effective Facebook strategies, particularly in the context of the platform's decreasing engagement, declining organic reach and flattening community growth. It has become all too common for companies to develop content strategies that lack coherence, become repetitive or fail to engage consumers.

While brands know their way around Instagram and take advantage of the many features available, there seems to be a much bigger struggle when it comes to Facebook.

What used to previously work on the platform: polished visuals and inspiring copywriting, is failing to speak to users and content strategies need to be aligned with consumer behavior and expectations in order to be successful. So how do companies develop content that takes them out of the algorithm trap?

Community and conversation are now key to Facebook's long-term strategy, and the COVID-19 crisis has only strengthened this existing trend, with people having to substitute real-life interactions with online ones due to social distancing.

Luxury consumers mainly use the platform to get information about upcoming events, product launches and to be kept up-to date, according to a study conducted by Facebook in June last year.

Brands who will be able to create meaningful communities while delivering the content users are most interested in, will be the ones mastering the Facebook game. But how do brands go about implementing these strategies?

Based on [DLG's \(Digital Luxury Group\)](#) years of experience in social media and digital marketing, we've compiled a few key strategies to help your brand take it to the next level.

Build engaging communities with Facebook Groups

There are over 10 million groups on Facebook, with 1.4 billion people using them at least once a month. These numbers are expected to keep growing as new updates are announced in order to place even more emphasis on groups in the future.

As Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg recently said, "Groups are at the heart of the experience" and some brands have already moved in that direction.

Groups have the potential to drive higher engagement through increased dialogues and conversations. They also give brands an opportunity to position themselves on relevant topics in a more authentic and proactive fashion.

While people seem to be paying less attention to content on their feed, many choose to spend additional time in Facebook groups. Users know they will be able to engage with like-minded people and see valuable content on a particular topic.

Additionally, giving this extra space to user-generated content also gives brands the opportunity to be perceived as more authentic and genuine, as they bring their community at the center.

A brand could decide to set up a group about one of its iconic products that has developed a cult following, thus giving a platform to its most loyal or aspiring customers.

For example, Starbucks has set up the "Leaf Rakers Society," a group for people who want to celebrate fall all year long. Users can discuss their love for this particular season, the company's beloved Pumpkin Spice Latte and other very popular seasonal drinks. There are now more than 36,000 fall enthusiasts in the group, sharing about fall-themed topics.

Another possibility would be to set up a group about a topic that a brand cares deeply about.

For example, *National Geographic* has set up a group called "Women of Impact" to celebrate the achievements of women around the world and across industries, from astrophysics to filmmaking. The group has over 65,000 members.

In the case of the watch industry, there are dozens of groups of users sharing wrist shots and pictures of their favorite watches on Facebook.

However, there do not seem to be any watch brands that have strongly capitalized on that and given a platform for watch aficionados to talk about their passion. A missed opportunity to build strong online communities.

Master one-on-one interactions through Facebook Messenger

Every month, more than 20 billion messages are exchanged between private users and businesses on Facebook Messenger. Hence, 20 billion opportunities to make a lasting impression.

As physical distancing became the new norm earlier this year, people spent an increasing amount of time on messaging apps, thus strengthening the importance of this channel.

Many users currently use Facebook Messenger to ask questions to brands and they expect the experience to be personalized and efficient. A common mistake is the use of very generic chatbots that often end up irritating the end users due to a lack of relevance or the feeling of talking to a robot rather than to a brand that cares.

A good example of Facebook Messenger being used in an effective way is IWC.

The Swiss watch brand created a virtual one-to-one messenger chat with a virtual advisor for the launch of their new Portugieser collection. Users talking with the brand on Messenger were among the first to discover the new collection, received exclusive content and tailor-made recommendations.

Additionally, community-building has become a big focus on Messenger as well: the option to watch videos together in a chat, the introduction of Messenger rooms or the creation of dedicated spaces to discover stories and messages of close friends are just some of the recent or upcoming updates announced for the app.

As Facebook Messenger becomes more personal, brands will have to craft even more personalized messages to break through and build valuable and lasting conversations with their community.

Focus on content that is worth sharing

Many headlines about Facebook over the past few years stated that people were leaving the platform as they thought it had become "boring" and lost its relevance to them. But can we really blame them?

Looking at brand content on Facebook, it is all too often the same: a very nice picture of a product, a well-executed campaign video or celebrity content.

Even though users are increasingly interested in products launches, there is an opportunity to share it in a more meaningful way to foster conversations and build engaged communities.

Facebook is mainly used to stay in touch with friends and family: 88 percent of users. There is, therefore, an opportunity to craft content that people will want to share with the ones closest to them, hence content that is either valuable, relatable, inspiring or entertaining.

A good example of entertaining content was shared recently by Disneyland Paris, who created a live quiz on Facebook, asking questions about their amusement park, with different levels of difficulty and a downloadable answer sheet. Users also had the possibility to watch the video together as a group. The post was hence turned into a playful and educational moment for the Disneyland fans.

Skincare brand Glossier recently shared a video to celebrate moments of joy during the challenging times of the lockdown. It was ultimately related to their hand cream, hands being "a conduit for connection, helping to create moments of comfort". They managed to communicate about their product while integrating it into a topic, that people can strongly relate to in this given time, the need for comfort and reassurance.

Understanding the expectations of your community

As the algorithm identifies content that is being liked, commented or shared as qualitative content that should be pushed further, generating early engagement is crucial to get visibility on the platform.

Hence, it is essential for brands to be able to craft content that strongly speaks to their audience.

What the brands above have in common is that they strongly understand the needs and expectations of their community.

Starbucks knows how nostalgic people get about their fall drinks and IWC knows what watch aficionados expect from new watch collections. Hence, crafting a solid Facebook strategy will always start with an in-depth understanding of a brand's following.

Another key point for brands is to develop an integrated content strategy.

Whether brands decide to be active on their feed, groups or messenger, the common thread needs to be strong enough to continuously engage users. What should the tone of voice be? What image does the brand want to convey on that particular platform?

While Instagram builds brand image and LinkedIn establishes authority, Facebook is there to inform and get closer to the audience. Use it accordingly.

Once these points are taken into account, only then will it be possible for brands to escape the algorithm trap, build engaged communities and establish genuine and lasting conversations. With 2.6 billion monthly active users on the platform, it is certainly worth a try.

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