If you are going to head into the social media world, you have to have a Facebook account. Facebook is most likely the first place many of your customers go to if they are interested in following your company, and not having a presence on Facebook is about the same as not having any web presence at all. Facebook is also a great way to track your social media growth as the site provides detailed data on the amount of people accessing your profile, talking about your posts, and any buzz you are generating.

The most important thing to remember is not to let your Facebook profile stagnate. **Update it at least once a day, or more** if you can, because having an out-dated Facebook profile can seriously damage your company's image. People may even think you've gone out of business. If there is only one social networking site you decide to use, make it Facebook. But always remember to update.

Facebook Checklist

You should have a few things in place before you begin creating your Facebook account.

• **Email Address** - Make sure the account you choose is active and one that you will check frequently. Twitter may send you important information or updates about your profile to the email address you provide.

• **Username** - Keep in mind a username that you would like to use for your account. This will be how other users find and the name that will be used to represent you. Try to use your company name whenever possible, and try to be consistent with any other social media profiles you have already created.

• **Bio / About Me** - This will be the basic information that you want to use to describe yourself or your business. Try to keep your information short and to the point, but also be descriptive enough for users to understand the purpose of your profile.

• **Profile Picture** - You will be able to upload an image to represent your business in the account creation process. It is common to use a logo, head shot, or even image of your office or building. Be creative and professional with your profile image. Using the same profile image across all of your social profiles is recommended, but not required.

• **Website** - Don't forget to include your website URL if you have one, so that new fans can find, visit, and contact you for further information.

Create Your Facebook Account

First, you have to set up a page for your business separate from your personal profile, if you have one. To get started with Facebook pages, open your web browser and navigate to Create A Page and click on the category that best suits your business.

• **Local Business or Place -** Use this if you have a local, physical store front and rely heavily on foot traffic to sell your product or service. *If it recognizes your address, Facebook will be able to immediately group your profile with other local businesses and people living in your area. Anyone who accesses your page will also be able to print out a map showing exactly where your business is.*

• **Company, Organization or Institution -** This is the best option for businesses that don't have a physical store front that people can visit. *If most of your business is conducted across state/country lines or online, then choose this category.*

• **Brand or Product -** This option is more for those companies who push a particular product or brand that defines their company; think Coca-Cola or Apple. *As a small business owner, this choice probably isn't for you unless you have spent a lot of time and capital growing a very unique, distinguishable product.*

- **Artist, Band or Public Figure**. *This is a common choice if you are creating a page for a local band, politician, or celebrity.*

- **Cause or Community -** Only use this option if you are operating a charity. *This page functions a lot like the Company, Organization or Institution option, but is sadly not grouped by Facebook based on any broad category, making the Cause or Community option the least developed.*

Select Your Profile Category

Click on whichever option suits you best. The panel will reveal a form based on the selection you made and gather the information required. Fill out the information it asks for and click **Sign Up Now**.

The Local Business option will want an address as well as a category related to what you sell. The Company, Organization or Institution option will simply want you to choose a category and give your company's name. When that is filled out, click on get started.

Define The Administrator

It will then ask you to create a Facebook account, if you don't already have one. This is so your profile can be listed as and act as moderator for the new page. Fill in your email address, select a password, provide your date of birth and complete the Captcha. Click **Sign Up Now** to continue.

If you don't have a Facebook page, fill out the information in the form. If you do, click on 'I Already Have a Facebook account' and login. This account will then act as the administrator for the business account you are currently creating.

Select A Profile Image

After you create your account/log in, Facebook will ask you to upload a picture for your business. You should always include some visual aspects into your profile, separating your posts from the rest. Our first recommendation is always a logo, as long as the logo is not made up of text. (The text can become unreadable after Facebook renders it into a thumbnail.) Once you choose an image, click **continue**.

If you don't have a logo, you could always use a picture of your building or your office space. You could also consider using a good picture of yourself if your image is tied closely to the image of your business, like you would see with a private doctor's office or an attorney. If you don't currently have a photo for your profile, skip this step for now.

Invite New Fans

The next page will ask you if you would like to invite people to become fans of your page. If you have a personal Facebook, click on the 'invite friends' button and select the people you wish to contact. If this is the first time you've used Facebook, you can use the import contacts option to see who among your contact list has a Facebook and invite them that way.

By doing it this way, the amount of people you will be able to contact is probably going to be a bit small. Don't worry though! You can always get more fans as your business grows.

Enter Your Business Information

Facebook is going to ask for some basic information - namely your web site and a 255 character blurb about your business. Use this opportunity to give a quick run down of what your business does, where you are located, and how to contact you. Once you have completed, click continue.

This is not a space to advertise, it is simply an area to convey some information about your company to your customers or clients.

Exploring Facebook

Play around with it a little bit to get an idea of its functionality and check out all of the features and functions it offers! Some times the only way to truly

understand how it all works is trial and error. Don't be afraid to click buttons and explore this amazing tool. Next we will continue by looking at the various menus and tools that come build into your profile.
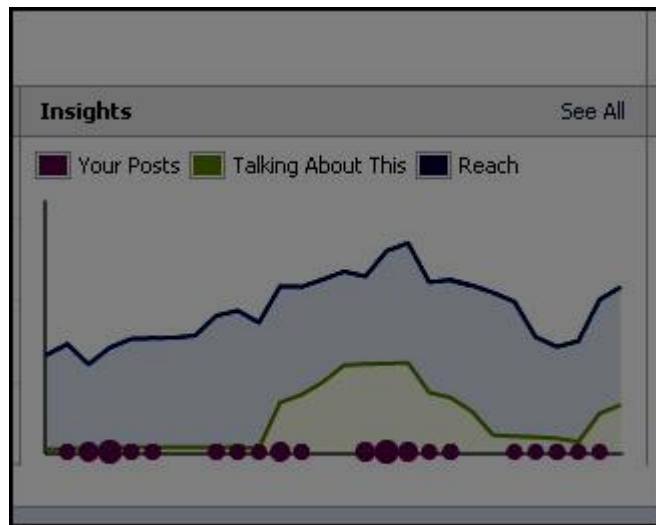
Exploring The Interface

The Facebook interface provides you with many tools you can use to manage your account, communicate with your customers, and market your business. Let's start by exploring the different menus and tools built into every Facebook profile.

Notifications Menu

The notifications menu in the upper left hand side of your profile is one of the most commonly used features of Facebook. By clicking on the Facebook logo **(1)**, you will be brought to an overview of your profile feed, containing all of the recent posts by both you and your fans. The first Icon **(2)** displays new likes to your business fan page. If you see a red box with the number of new likes, click it to reveal who has liked you since the last time you checked. The second icon **(3)** shows you when you receive direct messages. A direct message is sent from one profile to another, and not posted on either profiles wall. It is considered a more private way to communicate. The third icon (4) shows activity that involves you such as someone "liking" or commenting on one of your posts. You can also search for a person or business you know on Facebook with the search menu.

Account Menu

The account menu allows you to access the various parts of your account. The first thing you will notice is that when clicking on your profile name (1) , you will be directed to your timeline view, which shows your account as others view it. The Home button (2) replicates the feature of clicking on the Facebook logo by taking you to an overview of your feed. The dropdown menu (3) contains controls to "Use Facebook As". This feature is for managing multiple accounts. For example, If you had a personal account and you are managing the business page as an admin, you will have the option to use Facebook as either account with one login. You may also log out of your account with this menu by clicking the link.

Admin Panel And Timeline Navigator

On the right hand side of your profile, underneath the account menu are two important features. First is the admin panel. Click the Admin button anytime to show or hide the admin panel above your profile. The admin panel is only accessible to administrators of the account, and is not seen by people who have liked your page. It provides an overall view of recent notifications, new likes, messages, insights and page tips. The timeline navigator allows you to view historical data about a profile from its beginnings. You will only see the current month and year if you are just now creating your account, but you can view other profiles history states by clicking the time you would like to view.

Insights

The insights panel is an important analytics tool that you can use when managing your business' Facebook account. It shows you a graphic representation of your activity, and of the involvement of your fans with your profile. By clicking See All, you will go to the full page view which displays the times when you create posts, the people "Talking About This" (the number of people who have created a unique story about your page) as well as the weekly total reach (the number of people who have seen your content). You can use this information to gauge the success of your posts and the reactions from your fans.

Cover Photo and Profile Photo

Every account allows for the use of a profile picture and a cover photo. Each has its own purpose and is an important part of branding and individualizing your page. The cover photo is the large image that appears as the banner on the top of your page when people view your profile. You can be fun and creative, but we don't recommend that it is used for direct advertisements, although branding your page here is a definite plus. You will also see your profile image here. This image will accompany all posts that you add to your timeline. If you change your profile picture, all of your previous posts will show the current image, not the one you had when you created the post. Generally a logo or picture of who ever manages the Facebook account are common uses.

Applications

The applications portion of your profile gives quick access to the various pages of your profile. In this example we can see several common items that may be found here. The photos app take you to your albums, where all of the photos you upload to your profile live. You can comment, share, or tag any photo in your album. You also see the likes app, which displays your overall likes and talking about this numbers. The map application shows your bio, as well as your physical location and a map (great for local business that want to supply the location of a store or shop. Also, we have a custom application, called welcome to MyCorporation. You can add custom apps to advertise, share a survey, or host a web page directly in your Facebook account, although this feature is considered advanced and won't be described here.

Status Update

Your status is what your posts are considered to be in Facebook , so this is what you will use when you want to share a post with your fans. You can add text, video, music, hyperlinks, or images to a post. This means you can be very flexible and expressive with your profile to keep people engaged. Switching up your post types every once in a while also keeps your page more interesting.

Post Options

There are several options you have when organizing and controlling the posts you create and receive. Pin to the top will place the post at the top of your profile, making it accessible and readable to anyone who looks at your profile without having to scroll down to it. This could be used for an important or highlighted post youâ€™d like others to see. You can also change the date (common with photo posts) add a location to the post, hide it from your page making it no longer part of your timeline, delete the post permanently if you have made a mistake or need to retype it, or simply want to remove it from all locations, and report/ mark as spam, used only when you view a post as offensive or as spam, just like your email account.

Create An Event / Milestone

You may notice that when viewing your profile (click on your name in the top right hand corner) that your status update tool has an option called Event, Milestone +. This menu gives you some different post options that you can experiment with, one of which is the create event tool. You can create and invite people to take part in an event that you host or attend. This is a great way to reach out to customers and invite them to a tradeshow or even a sale or special event.

Create A Poll

Creating a poll is another great way to get people involved with your fan page. Polls can be about pretty much anything you can think of , and you can provide default answers for people to quickly select their answers. This can be something related to your industry, or even about customer experiences with your company as a feedback tool. This is definitely something that can be advantageous to a business if used correctly.