



Transcript:

V-Hub by Vodafone Business - Making the most of your online community

Hello and welcome to Use Facebook Groups to Connect with Your Audience!

My name is Matt and I am a community trainer for Facebook's Small Business Team and today in this video we're going to talk about how you can create community beyond your business page with Facebook groups.

We're going to look at how you can build a Facebook group for your page by walking through those fundamentals of actually how to set up that group and then, on top of that we're going to discuss some top tips on how to run a really successful Facebook group for your business.

This is going to ensure that you get the most engagement from your audience and also you can get the most insight about your audience too

But before we begin I just want to let you know about a fantastic resource that we have so please visit facebook.com/business/boost/events.

And as I said, it's an amazing online resource, it hosts more free Facebook webinars as well as online resources to learn about taking your business online, building resilience and connecting with your customers.

But let's get started with today's video.

Now it's Facebook's mission to give people the power to build community.

Every month over 2.2 billion people connect with loved ones on topics that they care about across Facebook.

Now your business is most likely a place where people come to connect over shared values.

Maybe they learn a new hobby or a new skill.

Or maybe your business is a place where people meet friends and come to socialize.

Facebook groups help create conversations that are less about your brand and instead more about the shared interests of the people in that group.

Groups provide an excellent opportunity for you to connect with your customers.

And this connection is going to give you insight onto what really matters most to them and from this you can get a lot of information.

So this is going to help you tailor how you use Facebook for example.

But on top of this, it's going to inform business decisions that you make because you really understand what makes your customers tick and what they're most interested in.

Now I'd like to share a quick video about a small business selling skateboards in Australia.

They're called Evolve and they built their presence on Facebook first of all by creating a page and then built an engaged community of skateboarding enthusiasts by using groups.

[Music]

We never had a vision of starting a company, electric skateboard company.

It was always more about a passion for going for that ride to get that release from their everyday life.

In the beginning I was trying to make some boards for my mates.

We had an investor.

After some time it didn't quite work out but they loved the idea.

They loved the concept but they couldn't see it as a business.

It was the time where it was like all right, what do we do?

Do we just keep it as a hobby and give up?

I remember him saying: would you be keen to sell the house and to really give this a shot?

It was massive for us.

This was our first home, we got married in the house.

There was just a little bit of magic and yeah, I guess it paid off.

When we decided to actually do this ourself, we then just go right...we've got to get the word out there.

We decided to create a Facebook page called Evolve Skateboards.

Our strategy was let's get some images, create some videos and put them on there.

The word started to get out there pretty quickly and especially when we started getting interest from other countries.

They were seeing these videos and they were sharing them on their feeds and we found that they just love getting out there and filming themselves.

We've got these friendships forming internationally through all these different rider's groups.

They've found someone who shares a similar passion for something that they do.

This culture that's been created organically.

It's just a proud moment seeing the adventures of Evolve spins me out.

[MUSIC ENDSG

Just like Evolve you too can build a community of people who share a similar passion.

In their case, it was a community of people who loved electric skateboards.

But think about the activities, hobbies or interests that are related to your business and you can create a group around that for people who share your passions.

So to better understand the value of Facebook groups, let's have a look at the different kinds of presents that you can actually have on Facebook.

So first of all, there's a personal profile and this is a place for you to connect with friends, family and acquaintances.

And this profile allows you to post about what's happening in your life.

Share statuses, post pictures and even go live in real time via video.

You can also set up a business page to have a separate business presence and this comes with additional free features.

To create a business page, you first need to have a personal profile set up so the two are connected but nobody would ever be able to see this connection unless you choose to make yourself a team member on your business page.

Now a business page is where people can connect with your company and learn more about your products and the services that you offer.

From your business page you can share updates.

It's a great way to engage with your customers and you can do things like accept orders directly on Facebook, have appointments booked and even use free tools to post job openings.

Now along with business pages you can also create or join a group for your business.

To create or join a group for your business you first need to have a business page set up.

Then business groups provide small businesses with an intimate setting to build a community around your business and engage with your customers in a slightly different way than you would when they post on your business page.

Your business group allows these discussions around shared interests and these are from people that are most passionate about your product or about your service.

As the group creator, you have the ability to manage and control member access to your business group.

So within your business group, you can do things like add events and set up an event calendar.

This is going to help you stay organized and also keep your group members up to date so they know exactly what to expect and what's coming up.

Now once you create your group using your business page, a link will appear on your business page so people who follow your page can easily see the group you've created.

When you post in your group your profile name is your business page name so it's not your personal profile.

So since all your group messages will come from your business page's profile, your posts are going to stand out.

They're going to remind people that you are the brand behind the group and you're the person really driving things.

You can also join and post on other groups from your business page which is a fantastic way to connect with your partners.

But it's also a great way to extend your business's voice to communities that share similar values to you, maybe have similar customers or maybe you think they're a community that is gonna be interested in what you have to offer.

Groups of business pages really are a special place where customers can share more in-depth discussions around those areas of passion.

For those of you trying to decide if a group is right for your business: here's a few things that they can actually help you achieve.

So first of all, you can speak with customers who share a passion relevant to your business.

They spark conversations in a safe and intimate discussion space and again, these people really are the ones that are going to be most interested in what you have to offer.

You can also gain insights around your audience so you can better understand, you know, who your audience are and what they care about most.

You can ask them for feedback, you can observe their conversations that they're having with one another and you can also use group insights to measure the activity and engagement that is going on on your group.

Or you can also engage in activities with your customers around the community.

So can your group come together over their shared values to then positively affect those in their local area.

Now before we walk through the steps of how to create a business group, let's just learn about an example of a small business that uses Facebook groups to really build their community beyond their business page.

So Niamh Sherwin-Barry is the co-founder of the Irish Fairy Doors Company.

And this company has a very important job, so her company finds human homes for fairies.

So this children's company has been selling handcrafted fairy doors to spark children's imagination since back in 2013.

And as their customer base grew they recognized the value of understanding their customers needs, as well as their customers wants.

Now even more importantly they began thinking about their customers and began educating themselves about the different cultures that their youngest fans were actually growing up in and thinking about how this would translate into the products that they're putting out to the market.

So to stay connected with their fairy fanbase and to connect with their customers on a deeper level they started a group called The Parents' Corner.

Now as a result their business actually saw impressive growth and they managed to house fairies as far afield as the United States, Canada and Australia and really thought about the impact of those different cultures as well.

Now before you start a group of your own, you really should think strategically about you and your audience and what they can gain from this group experience.

Now, for example a few things to think about:

So what audience do you actually want to reach?

So is it a certain section of your typical customer base or is it just the most loyal and engaged customers that you want to give some special access to?

Along with that, think about what's the goal of that group.

So do you want to generate discussion on a key topic or do you want to create exclusive content for those subscribers again to make them feel a little bit special?

Along with this, think about how you're going to measure that success in your group and that's considering both your business as well as the needs of your audience.

So you can measure this by the amount of interaction on your page driven by the members or you could have metrics related to initiatives started due to conversations that took place on that group.

For example, were events set up?

Or were there ideas for a new product?

Or maybe ideas to improve a current service that you offer?

Make sure that you set shorter term goals as well as longer term goals to assess how you're doing.

Now I'm going to take you through the steps of actually creating your own group.

But before I do that, just a quick reminder again to check out facebook.com/business/boost/events where you've got access to more free Facebook webinars and online resources to really help you learn to get your business online, build resilience, stay connected with your customers and adapt in real time.

But back to creating that page what are the steps that you have to take.

So first of all, go to your business page.

Then click on the top right hand corner of your Facebook page and select "New Groups".

Then click "Create Group".

Here you're going to be prompted to add a name for your group.

And then next, you're going to be given the option to invite people to join your group.

So you can invite people there and then. or you can wait until after the group is created and along with this you can also select your privacy setting for your group.

Now when you create a group you can actually choose from two privacy settings.

You can either have a public group or a private group.

And public groups mean exactly that.

They mean anyone can see what's on that group page, they don't need to be a member to see what's going on.

Depending on the group settings though, people who want to join the group might actually need to be approved by either an admin or a group member.

Now private groups are still searchable and anyone can actually request to join them but the content on that group is only actually visible to the members, so you need to be a member to see what's going on.

Then click "Create" and you're done with the setting up the group.

Now after you set up and create that group you can assign roles.

So by default, you are the admin of the group.

And you can share the responsibility with other members of the group if you want, but be mindful when sharing and providing permissions to the other members.

So for some context, admins have the power to make major changes to the group.

So they can change the group name, they can change the cover photo, they can add and remove people, they can change group settings and they can also delete the group.

So you want to be, you know, really think about who you give those access rights to.

The other role that you can assign is moderator.

So moderators can approve and decline membership requests and they can post on the group as your business.

Along with this, they can also moderate content.

If you have a public group and you want to have more control over who joins the group, you can turn on membership approvals.

So by turning on membership approvals, all new members will require that approval to actually enter into the group.

So here you can select anyone in the group which will allow any member of the group, so an admin or on top of that, a moderator to approve members.

Or if you decide you want to have more control who can actually join that group.

For example you might want current customers or only local residents to join the group.

If that's the case, you can actually set your membership approval settings to only admins and moderators.

So that means you can personally approve every member.

So it's just down to the admins and moderators and the group members themselves don't have control who comes into that group.

Now we've walked through how to create a group.

Let's talk about how you can make that group come alive.

So first of all, make a great initial impression for your group by selecting a group cover photo that's going to really attract your audience and engage them.

So on the screen you can see chunks of sweet potato as part of a seasonal recipe group.

It's clearly related to what that group is all about.

Again, somebody landing on that page for the first time might get inspired by it, might think of other ideas that they could contribute to that group.

Now along with this, you're going to want to spend some time crafting your group description.

What it's going to do is going to help ensure that new and prospective members know exactly what that group is for.

So make sure to add group rules to that description.

Again, that's going to allow members who are joining to be aware of the group norms and the expected behavior of the group.

And as you're developing your group there's several ways that you can actually grow that community.

So first of all you can send a bulk invite to up to a thousand contacts.

Along with that, you can also add a join group button to your business page and also push your group on any emails that you're sending out.

Another great way is to encourage members to invite their friends.

Especially those who like to share the interests and passions of them as they're going to fit seamlessly into that group dynamic you set up.

And don't forget to promote your group on your business page so the people that are interacting with your page are more than likely going to be interested in the topic of your group.

Now it sounds basic but it's really important to always welcome new people when they join.

It's something really simple but it easily can be forgotten.

So ask new members a question or invite them to introduce themselves in the group.

By engaging with them directly you put them at ease that they're in the right place and this really helps build a sense of community from their very first interaction.

It's also important to help members understand what that group is for.

So a short post that gives some examples of what people can share and discuss really helps members get acclimatized to what's expected of them.

You also need to think about how you're going to drive discussions on your group.

Now this isn't always your responsibility as over time, you want your members to feel more empowered and start driving these conversations, but it's still really important to create targeted content for your group's page.

Now a little preparation goes a long way ensuring that you keep your community active.

And make sure that you get input from your group by running polls.

So this feedback can both create conversation and it also gives you fantastic insight into what your loyal customers are actually thinking.

You can also post text, photos and video content.

So using Facebook live to host a discussion or maybe reveal new products or a service can really give your group exclusive access.

Again, this involvement really builds a sense of exclusivity and community within the group.

Now when deciding on what to share with your community, always keep in mind what topics are going to be most relevant to them.

So asking simple questions to members that they can easily answer or ways that they can actually share their unique knowledge or experience is a great way of starting this.

Simply, questions are fun, direct and a really easy way to invite conversation on your group.

For example you might be a clothing store.

And you might want to ask your group about, you know, what's their favorite color or what style do they prefer going into a new season and that could really be related to your products and drive which ones you're going to push.

Or maybe you are a bakery and you might want to ask about your group's favorite flavor combinations.

So you can use this to inform the ingredients you can that they can actually pull into new tasty treats that you're thinking about creating.

So make the most of the insights that your group members can actually give you.

And if you actually use one of their ideas, which happens more than you think, make sure you celebrate that and thank them on your group.

And that leads us on to our next point about letting people know that you're paying attention.

So make sure that you're commenting on posts.

Again, even if it's just to acknowledge that you're happy that they're posting.

It encourages members more in the future to post again.

And you want your group to feel like a place where members feel really comfortable about expressing themselves.

A place where there's creativity and healthy constructive debate.

And to do this, our next tip is to tag people in posts.

So if you want to hear about from somebody specifically or maybe give them a shout out to thank them, tag them in a post using the @ symbol.

Tagging a member with the @ symbol will highlight their name in blue as you can see in the image here.

Now depending on the notification settings, they may also be notified via a push message that you've actually tagged them in a post.

If they don't have push messages turned on, then they're going to see that you've tagged them when they actually sign in to their Facebook profile.

This links back to the earlier point about thanking those people who inspire you to create new products or maybe adapt your service in one way.

Next, we recommend you collaborate with your group in a variety of ways.

So we've already spoken about polls and the importance of getting input and feedback, but you can also get your group to help organize activities, for example events and they can discuss these things in real time by chatting on that group.

So for example, you might actually be thinking about having an event in the next month and you want to engage with your group on maybe the location or the theme of that next event.

Another point to point out is that you have control over how people interact with these posts and if you ever need to, you can always turn off the commenting on a post.

Now, when you want to turn commenting off on a post, you click on the three dots on the upper right hand corner of the post as you see here and select "Turn off commenting".

When you turn off commenting, the only action a group member can take on a post is to like it.

And there's a number of reasons why you may actually want to do this.

So say you are asking for help when deciding on a name for a new product and you know you've now made that decision.

You may turn off commenting on that post so members don't waste their time still providing more names for it.

So it drives people to posts that are actually still relevant and active.

Or maybe a particular conversation got a little bit heated or maybe you can see it's heading in the wrong direction.

Turning off commenting might help cool things down a little bit.

So in this case you might want to create a post encouraging them to help keep that group a safe place and encourage them to report anything that violates those group rules that you've really clearly set up to begin with.

Now if you find that things are still getting a little bit out of hand, you can turn on post approval.

And what this does is it will require that an admin approves all the posts before they actually go live on the group.

Now once you create your group, you want to keep an eye on how everything is actually going.

And we're going to talk about group insights and how they can be viewed when you navigate on your group and what you do is you select "Group Insights" on that tab on your desktop that you can see and Group Insights actually enables you to see a real-time view of a number of different metrics.

So you can see the growth of your group and you can track the number of new joiners over any given period of time.

You can also see if the number of posts, likes and reactions have increased or decreased over a time frame and think about some of the initiatives you've been using to drive increased engagement to see if they've worked.

That's gonna allow you to reflect on whether your posting strategy has influenced the group the way you want to, you know, which posts really have driven engagements, which ones haven't picked out the good things and then proven to iterate over time.

Now on the screen you can see popular days and this provides a graph with posts, comments and reactions and you can start asking questions like why is Thursday such a popular day?

Maybe that's the day that your Facebook live is and that's where you get the most engagement.

Likewise Popular Times surprise you with a graph or time of the day that members post, comment or react.

So for example you have a running club group and people regularly post in the morning after that run.

That means you need to be available to engage with your group when they're speaking.

And these insights can help target important messages at times of the week, times of the day that you're going to get the most attention on.

You can also see your "Top Posts" and this will provide you with an at the glance view of, you know, the best performing content and also the people that are posting and the engagement on that post.

Now it's really important to note that Group Insights are only available to admins of groups with 50 members or more.

So that brings us to the end of the session on Facebook groups.

Group survives an excellent opportunity to have conversations with your customers.

And these conversations are going to give you insight into what matters most to them and it can really help you tailor how you use Facebook and the number of tools that we offer but also some of the business decisions that you're going to make.

Now make sure you share your content with your community on a regular basis to ensure that they're staying connected and monitor your Group Insights to do this.

Use this information to iterate and improve how you engage with your group over time.

Thank you so much for joining me!

I hope you're walking away with new ideas on how to build an effective Facebook group for your business.

And one last reminder to please visit facebook.com/business/boost/events to explore the rest of the series and all of our additional free training resources as well.

Another ask is please join our UK Booster Facebook group and here you can ask questions, interact with other business owners and see the latest content that we're offering.

Thank you again for joining and please take care!