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Digital Skills and Research Methods.

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## **Can Facebook be used by companies to communicate internally?**

Although Facebook started as a social networking site exclusively for students, its uses go far beyond throwing parties and discussing classes. Businesses, for example, can use Facebook groups and messaging to allow their employees to communicate in a familiar interface. While Facebook can be useful, using it raises some concerns in a business environment, so consider safer alternatives as well.

**Facebook groups** can be a valuable collaboration tool that can improve communication within your business by allowing employees to share information, images, and quizzes in a message board-like environment. Your company could create a private Facebook group for the entire company, or create a smaller group for a specific department or project. Facebook offers two types of private groups: closed and secret. If you create a closed group, anyone on Facebook can see that the group exists and who belongs to it, but they can't see the content of the group page. A secret group is completely invisible to anyone outside the group. Choose a privacy setting based on your business needs, keeping in mind that anyone - including competitors - can see which employees belong to a closed group.

### **Posts**

Facebook messages allow your business to send quick communications to employees. If you created a Facebook group for a department, for example, you can use the message function to send updates to all members of the department. Employees can also use Facebook messages for communication and collaboration. For a small-scale or short-term project, it may make more sense to create a Facebook thread rather than a Facebook group for the project.

### **Concerns**

Although you can restrict membership of a Facebook group to your business employees, anything posted in the group leaves your company's internal network and travels through Facebook's servers. The same goes for Facebook messages. This creates the possibility, however slight, that others can access the company's information. Additionally, employees are likely to use their Facebook accounts for both personal and business use, opening the possibility for sensitive information to leave the company environment. Avoid using Facebook for sensitive or proprietary topics and instruct all employees to use the "/" prefix when logging into Facebook.

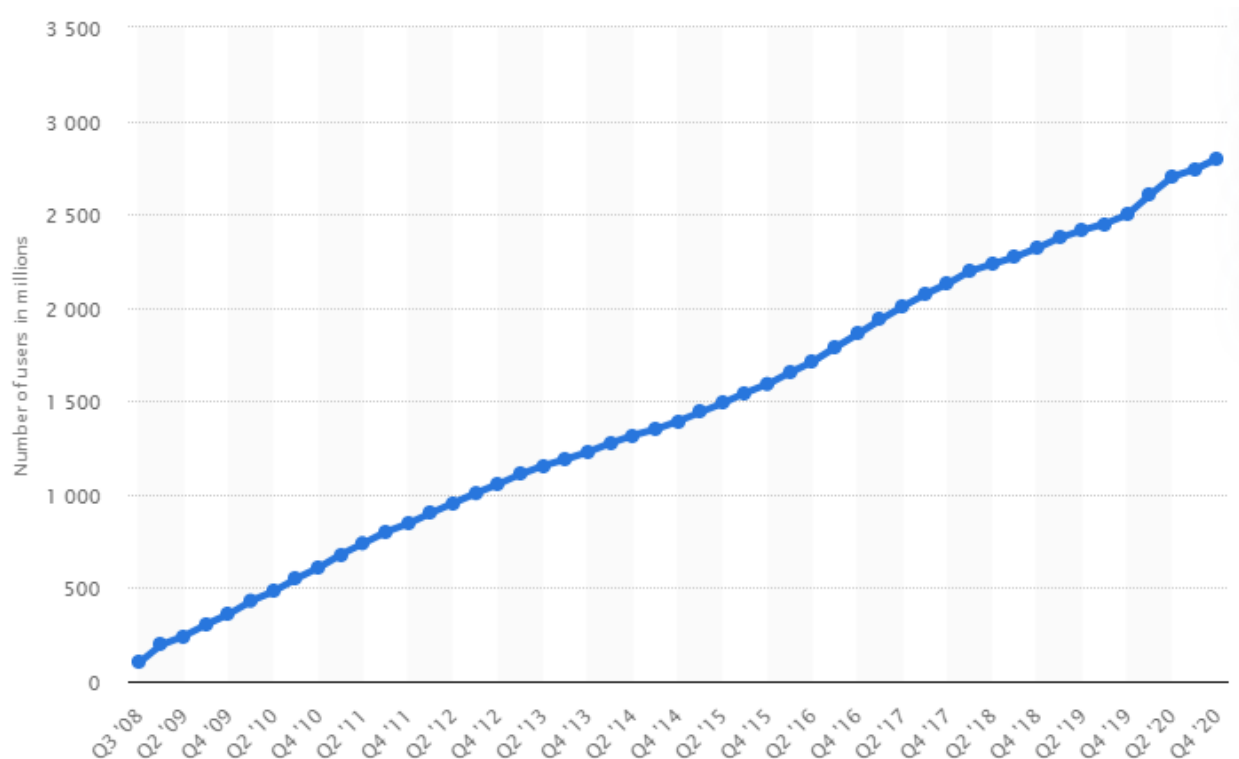
### **Alternatives**

For security reasons, some companies have built their own social networks. These networks offer the advantages of Facebook while maintaining a closed network environment. Yes! Brands, for example, runs a closed social network called iCHING. Social networks that run entirely on a company's internal network are of course the most secure; however, building and maintaining this type of network can be beyond the capabilities of a smaller business. Specialized business social networks such as Yammer, Chatter, and Socialcast can offer some of the same functionality as Facebook, with fewer security issues.

You can promote your own business on Facebook.

## I. Why promote on Facebook

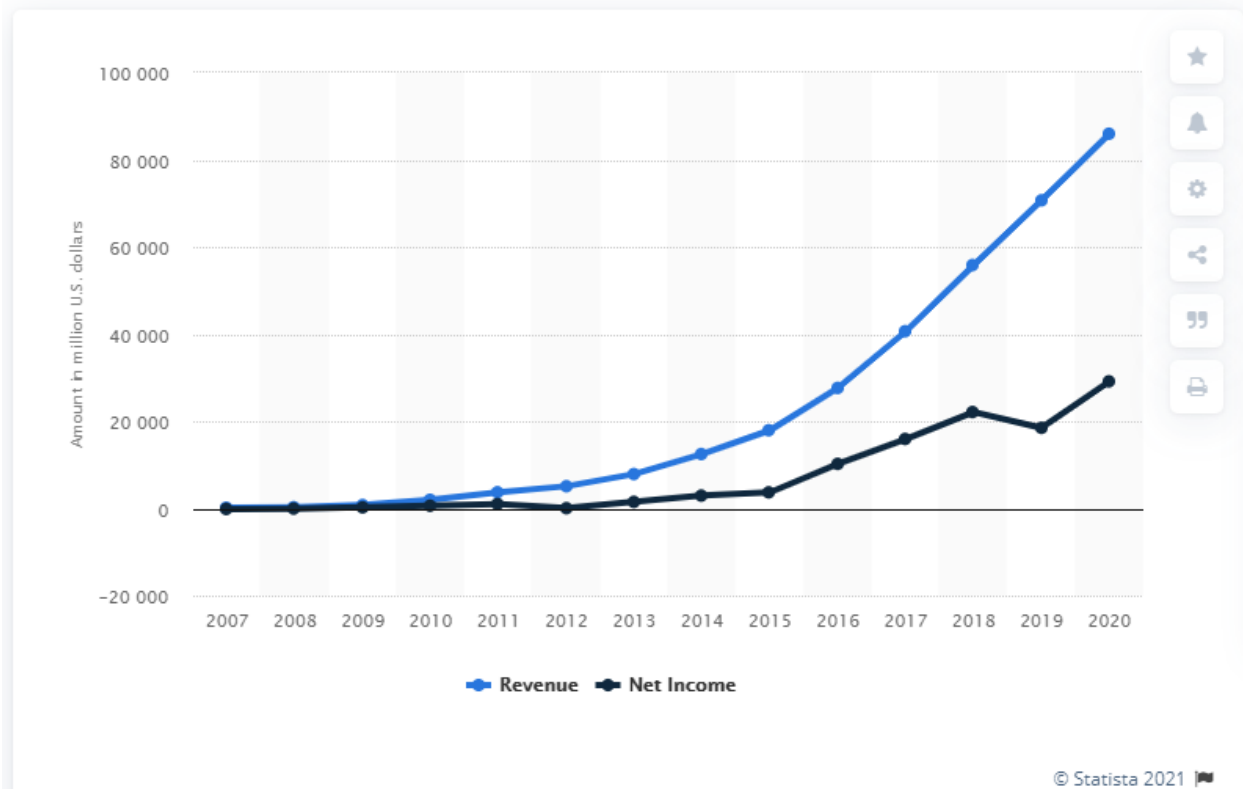
In the last quarter of 2020 Facebook reported an incredible number of 2.8 billion active users (statistia.com) and mentioned that the total number of users of their ecosystem (Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger) is 3.3 billion people.



Revenue in 2020 was somewhere around \$86 billion, almost entirely from advertising. If we look at the numbers and compare them year by year, they become even more impressive and the annual growth is considerable.

## Facebook's revenue and net income from 2007 to 2020

(in million U.S. dollars)



Keeping all these aspects in mind, marketers and entrepreneurs, small and large, created a Facebook page, started posting, creating paid ads and waited for customers to flock to buy.

The problem is that many of us, although we invest money, time and other resources, do not necessarily manage to get results with Facebook promotion.

That's exactly why I wrote this guide, to help you discover why what you've tried so far hasn't worked and see what you can do next when it comes to Facebook promotion.

Being present is not enough, we have to do things right. And for that we have to understand...

### **How does Facebook work?**

When Facebook was in its infancy, the timeline (or wall back then) looked a lot like how Twitter works today. That is, you saw everything every friend posted and all the pages you followed.

But over time, as the number of users continued to grow, we had more and more friends and followed more and more pages, and the NewsFeed (that is, the place where we see all the posts) was already full of far too many posts that were no longer of interest to us necessarily.

You see, maybe 4/5 years ago when you created your Facebook account you liked Fast & Furious, How High and Andreea Bălan. But people change and so do their tastes.

Facebook understood this very well and in 2011 launched EdgeRank, an algorithm that determines what appears in our NewsFeed.

It takes into account more than 100,000 factors to decide what to show us when we enter Facebook. But don't panic, we don't need to know all these factors, what's important to remember is that Facebook tries to figure out what interests us and show us more of these things.

For example, you may have noticed that when you're on Facebook you see more posts from the friends you interact with the most, whether that means texting each other or leaving comments on their photos.

The same is the case when it comes to pages (I hope you have a page with Likes already and we are not talking about a profile with the name of the company). Well, the more we interact with a Page we've Liked, the more often we'll see posts from that Page in our NewsFeed.

Although there is no clear and official classification of the most important criteria that Facebook takes into account to "figure out" our interest in a page, from experience I would say that the order of importance of the factors is this:

Because we habitually like almost everything, it's not as important as a share or a comment.

Also, in addition to the things we do on the platform, Facebook also looks at our behavior in the rest of our online activity to figure out our interests (yes, it tracks us on other websites too, we agreed all of us with this when we gave "Accept" to Cookies).

As seen in the image above with the Facebook algorithm, another important criterion is time. The longer a post is made, the fewer people it will be seen.

This is important because otherwise the only things we would see on Facebook would be pictures of Grumpy Cat and memes that went viral a few years ago. This component of temporal decay makes room for new and exciting things.

Why are the above things important? Because, as we'll see below, it's crucial to keep in mind how the platform works if we want to be successful. Otherwise, no one will see our posts.

Think mobile first

Another important thing I would like to mention here is that Facebook is already a mobile-first platform. Almost 80% of users use Facebook only from mobile platforms.

Why is this important? Whether we're talking about organic or paid promotion, at some point you're going to send users to your website, and if it doesn't offer a great mobile experience, you've lost them.

Plus, images look a little different on mobile and desktop, and you have to think about mobile users first.

"How do I promote my Facebook page for free?"

I get this question so often that I have to answer it here. The short version: you can't really.

Let's see the long version.

We have 2 main ways we can reach people on Facebook:

Organic – people simply see the posts on our page;

Promoted – we pay for a certain post to be shown to people;

Although we can theoretically reach people without paying (organically), this method of promotion no longer works for 98% of business types.

or millions of people for free are the ones that have viral native content. Pages like BuzzFeed, recipes or funny content still manage to do this, but for the rest of us, we need to allocate a monthly budget to promote Facebook posts and create paid ads, otherwise we'll be working in vain.

### **When is it good to post on Facebook?**

I mentioned above the importance that time plays when it comes to the NewsFeed and the display of posts. But time also plays a very important role that we must take into account.

How does Facebook figure out what content is interesting to show to more people? Post interactions, as discussed above.

It's just that there is a critical moment for the success of any post, whether it's an image, a video or a text status: the moment we publish the post and what happens immediately after.

Basically, the first and most important signals that Facebook gathers about how interesting a post is, to decide whether to show it to more people than the 3-5% it's normally shown to, come within the first few minutes of when the post is made.

In other words, if you post and people interact with the post (comment, share, like), then Facebook will understand that it is interesting and will show it to more people. Conversely, if the first few minutes it's posted and the first people it's shown to don't interact with it, then it won't show it any further.

So for each post, Facebook runs a mini-experiment to decide if it's interesting or not. There is no official number of minutes this data is collected, but I believe the most important period is the first 30-60 minutes after we post or when our audience comes online.

So the answer to the question "What time should I post on Facebook?" it "depends". It depends on the hours when your audience is online. For some pages morning posts work better, for others in the evening.

Generally, most people are online in the evening, after 7-8pm, so this time slot is a good starting point. It's just important to test and see what works for your page. Especially since everyone posts in the evening, it's harder to get your post noticed. We at SMARTERS have had success with certain pages when we post in the morning around 7am.

In the Insights section you can find a lot of data about how the posts are doing and about the audience. Go in there weekly and look at the numbers, you'll get a better understanding of what's working and what's not.

How can I know my audience better?

I'm glad you asked 😊 Understanding your customers and page fans is one of the most important aspects when it comes to Facebook marketing. It helps us both to create interesting posts and to create more effective ads.

There are several ways you can come to understand your audience better, but two of my favorites are:

a) Go to the fan profiles of your Facebook page

Especially when we start a new project within SMARTERS, but also in general, I like to look at the people who interact with the page, those who like posts or leave comments and go into their private profiles, to be able to get to know them better: who they are, what other things they share, what they're interested in, what they look like demographically. Some of the best insights have come this way, and nothing can replace manual research.

b) Use Facebook Insights

If the strategy above is a qualitative one, we also have a way to understand our audience quantitatively.

For this purpose, Facebook has developed Facebook Insights, a free tool that allows you to see very interesting statistics related to the audience of your page or other audiences that interest you.

How can we get people to interact with our posts?

Virtually everything we've covered so far helps us answer this question, or at least understand the context and constraints under which we must accomplish this.

It's a science in itself that makes content shareable or not, but there are some important things to keep in mind.

Emotions are generally what drive a person to take action (in this case to interact with your content). According to studies, the main emotions that lead us to share something are amusement, interest, surprise or joy.

### **Content is king.**

One thing that I feel many entrepreneurs and marketers ignore is that you have to put in the effort to create quality content that your fans will appreciate. Most expect that if they have made an account and post "something", the results should come.

But the reality is not like that at all.

Precisely because the level at which fans interact with your page determines whether or not they will see your posts in the future, it is incredibly important to create quality content that excites fans and makes them like, share or comment.

One of the most important things to understand about Facebook is that the creative side is critical. If you don't do a good job here, you have no chance of achieving your goals.

Try to post things related to your business and the context in which you operate. For example, if you sell boots it is normal to talk about boots, about footwear in general, about the weather and other related things. Try to speak like a human being, not a company. People want to connect with other people.

### **The context is God**

An actionable piece of advice that I like to give, and that I have also received, is precisely this content/context duality.

Facebook is a visual platform. If on Twitter it is normal to post only a short text, on Facebook videos and images dominate.

That's why it's so important to understand how each platform works, because no matter how great a text we write, it won't create as much engagement with fans on Facebook as an image or a video, for example. That's just how it works.

In everything you do on Facebook you have to think about whether it will spark the interest and engagement of your fans. If you post 2-3 low quality things and people don't interact with them, the next time you post something they won't even see it (hint: the algorithm).

The idea of context is useful in one more way: it can help us find many post ideas for our Facebook page.

Connecting with context is one of the best strategies for entering the conversation on social media. Is there an important national event coming up, such as a holiday? Create a post related to it.

Also, social/cultural trends are just as interesting for our fans, you just have to choose topics relevant to your brand.

Just look around and you'll find an almost inexhaustible source of ideas for posts that get people engaged.

This is where my research and data reporting ends, thanks for your attention.