

Guideline for Facebook Pages

April 2012

Facebook is a global social networking website and service, which has over 600 million users worldwide, and about 1.8 million active users in Ireland. It is used by members to set up a **Profile** page about themselves, make connections with **Friends** (friends, family, colleagues, acquaintances), share news, information, photographs and activities, and access specific Facebook **Pages**, that are dedicated to products, groups, organisations, charities, movements etc.

If used in the right way, Facebook can be a very powerful tool for communicating with clients and the public, and for promoting a public service to a specific group of people. However, because of the way people prefer to use Facebook, it is important to ensure that any Facebook page is relevant to the audience for whom it is designed. It is important to be sure that the people you want to **Like your Page** are going to benefit from and be interested in regular updates from you. Connecting with people in this way should be seen as opening a dialogue with them, and in making a page, we need to ensure that we are ready to take their comments and be able to reply and converse on an ongoing basis.

Facebook is not a channel through which you can broadcast messages about a product or service. Rather it is a forum through which you can engage with a specific audience or community on a topic. Facebook requires two way communication and the ability to resource and facilitate this on an ongoing basis must be carefully considered before selecting Facebook as a communication tool.

Tone of voice is very important in using social media. This will develop with practice, but when making updates or responding to comments, effort should be made to adopt a friendly, conversational and personal tone of voice. Look at other Facebook pages or Twitter profiles to see how this works – we don't speak in formal headlines, but more as you would speak directly to a client who is in your service.

Below is a step by step guide of how to set up a Facebook page and some top line rules of thumb for managing it. But, before setting up your page, first you must ask yourself and your team the following questions:

Why? What are you setting out to achieve? Why will a Facebook page help your service?

Who? Who are you wanting to target and engage with?

What? What content are you going to share?

When? How often will you update the page and at what times of day?

How? How are you going to promote the page, how are you going to keep the content interesting and how are you going to make the page work for your service?

How long do you intend to keep the Facebook page active? Is there a completion date for what it is seeking to do and have you planned an exit strategy?

It's important to have answers to the questions above before embarking on the project and dedicating staff time to it. It is then essential that you contact your Communications Office to discuss your plans and get approval for your Page. We will help you set it up and ensure you are supported in getting the page off the ground.

Setting up your page

To create a page, you will need an active Facebook account. If you don't already have an account, head to <http://www.facebook.com/> and set one up. If you already have a purely personal Facebook account, you should consider setting one up in the name of your service. The account will need an individual staff member to own it, but can be set up using a work email address and contact details.

Go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/> and hit 'Create Page' or if logged in to Facebook, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on 'Advertising'. Then click 'Pages' and 'Create a Page'

Fill out your page name and select your type of business from the drop down menus. When you're happy, hit 'Create official Page'

You should now have your new, blank page in front of you. Proceed to follow the step by step guide...

1. Start by uploading a profile image – this should be your logo, recognised press image or team shot. Use a clear image that's instantly recognisable as being of your service, as this image will show up in your fan's news pages and on all your comments. Try and use a square image if possible, or crop the image before adding it, this means it won't distort when used in thumbnail images.
2. Suggest your page to your fans. You can invite your contacts to 'like' your page via email or via an initial circular to your Facebook friends. We suggest leaving this until the page is complete and up and running but it's a good way of getting some initial numbers.
3. Edit your information. This is where you can add your location, website, contact details, company information and general information. This will be visible to your audience, so make it clear, informative and to the point;
4. Save your info and head back to your profile. There's a small box to the left of the page – write a short description of yourself in here along with any other links you want to share;
5. It's important to establish who is going to manage your page. As the page creator, you will be the only one with administrative/editing rights on the page. To add an administrator, hit 'Edit Page' and select 'Manage admins';

6. You can personalise your Facebook URL (web address) by selecting a unique username. It will appear in the location bar of your browser after "http://www.facebook.com/" when you view your page. Login to Facebook and visit <http://www.facebook.com/username/> to set your username. You need to have 25 likes before you can set a username so you may need to get some friends to help you get started. Choose wisely as once it's set, a username can't be changed.

Make it stand out

Once you have the basic information sorted, there are several ways of giving your page that extra sparkle;

1. Take advantage of the photos tab and create some photo albums. This is an opportunity to visually showcase some of your work or services. Click the 'Photos' tab to start uploading;
2. If you have any videos, you can upload those too via the 'Videos' tab
3. Applications are the most effective way to enhance your page. Apps add extra functionality to your page, such as drawing in your blog's RSS feed, Twitter feed or YouTube videos. There are hundreds of apps available for your page. You can browse them [here](#).
4. Create an engaging welcome page and set it as your landing page (hit Edit > Manage Permissions > Default Landing Tab). When people visit your page for the first time, don't let your wall be the first thing they see – it's not very pretty.

Promote your page

You have a new page. Now how do you get people to like it? There are several methods;

- Add a Facebook button on to your website or blog that links to your Facebook page.
- Create a Facebook badge and add it to your website, encouraging users to like you.
- Add a link to your Facebook page in your email signature
- Integrate Like buttons to your websites pages, blog and services
- Add a link to your news letters
- Take advantage of Facebook Places. If you're a location based business, i.e. a cafe, restaurant, shop, you can allow people to 'check in' to your establishment using the service. Make sure you connect your check-in page to your company page

Facebook Do's and Don'ts

- Do Monitor your page regularly
- Do Reply to comments
- Do Keep it fresh – update the page regularly
- Do Mix it up! Make use of images, videos, applications and links
- Do Engage with your community
- Do Ask questions and more importantly, listen
- Do Monitor and record your page visits and interactions using Facebook's Insights feature
- Do Avoid voicing opinions
- Don't Neglect your page – a stagnant page is not a good reflection of your service
- Don't Bombard your fans with content
- Don't Disable user comments
- Don't Be boring. Make your posts interesting and worthy of reading
- Don't Forget you're representing your service and the HSE

Facebook may have over 600 million users, but your page won't necessarily drive sales or traffic to your site. However, if you put the right tools in place Facebook can become a powerful tool to engage with current fans, attract new fans and promote a positive service.

Staff Guidelines for Social Media Use

We keep discussions relevant to our service only.

We ensure that discussions do not include situations that may compromise employees or the organisation. We also ensure that young people, aged under 18, do not compromise themselves via their comments on your page. If we observe this, we ensure their comments are removed.

If we upload pictures, we keep them appropriate to the service, and ensure each person pictured has given written consent for the photo to be used by the organisation on its website and on its Facebook pages. If people aged under 18 are pictured, written consent from their parent or guardian is also required.

We have the right to delete any comments, pictures, videos that we find compromising. We also have the right to remove users from the site for any violations at any time.

We do not share confidential information about the organisation, service or its clients. For example, we do not discuss a particular client's personal history or information or details of their experience within the service – even casual references acknowledge that the individual was or is a client or former client. These rules apply even if the client was specifically profiled on, or directly posted a comment on, our website or Facebook site.

When discussing or representing the organisation on the internet, we use good judgment and strive for accuracy in our communications.

For Assistance:

Call the HSE National Communications Directorate – Public Communications Office on 01 625 2620 email digital@hse.ie