



Live it up

Jemma Edwards shares 20 ways to use Facebook Live to grow your business

In 2015, YouTube was the go-to platform for Internet videos. It's a hugely popular medium and although they had been streaming some live events for a few years, it primarily relies on users recording a video before uploading it onto the platform.

Facebook had wanted to compete with YouTube in the Internet video market for some time and in April 2016 they introduced a new service called Facebook Live.

Facebook Live gives the user the ability to stream videos live and direct to their Facebook newsfeed. In less than two years, Facebook Live has managed to overtake YouTube to become the number one internet video streaming service.

So, although YouTube is still popular with the younger generation, the sheer scale of Facebook (it has an audience of more than two billion users who engage for an average of 35 minutes per day) makes it a substantial advertising platform for any business.

Facebook Live does still reach the younger market, but it is the adults that tend to use Facebook more with 79%

of all online US adults being Facebook users. Spending on social media marketing is forecast to be around \$50bn by 2019, putting it level with newspaper advertising, which demonstrates just how big social media is for businesses today. Live streaming video gives businesses the ability to not just reach out to their ideal audience but to also engage in live conversations with them. With Facebook Live and other live streaming video services becoming the trend, there's no better time to make sure that we get maximum benefit from it.

SO HOW CAN IT BENEFIT YOUR BUSINESS?

Properly done, it is a fantastic way to increase engagement with a brand's Facebook page. Like any form of communication aimed at your potential customers, you really need to be creating content that is both valuable and will appeal to them; neither of which is easy. These tips should help increase your exposure, audience engagement and ultimately your customer base.

1. Host a competition or offer a prize

You're probably running various offers on other advertising channels so why not Facebook Live? It should be fun and something that people would want but also needs to have some connection to your brand. Free consultations and assessments work well as do discounts or even free treatments.

2. Stream live from an industry event, conference or seminar

Give people who can't be there the chance to experience what is happening from the day.

3. Chat with influential industry figures

Ask the most prominent person in your network to be a guest on your live stream. Make sure you plan your questions beforehand so you know what you're going to talk about

4. Plan it well in advance and promote it

Put together an image and put it across your Facebook pages, social media accounts, website and any other online platform you can think of to generate interest. Make sure you set a specific date and time.

5. Build anticipation by counting down to the event

It's not enough to announce it once and expect people to remember to tune in. Keep sending out reminders and when it comes to the actual day, send more as you get closer to the start to increase enthusiasm.

6. Have regular interaction with your followers

Live streaming lets you answer questions and get instant feedback. But interaction doesn't only have to be in the event. Regular engagement gives the appearance of being authentic, easier to approach and people are likely to trust you more.

7. Insert the Facebook button onto your website

If you have a lot of traffic to your website then adding a Facebook link is a must and easy to do. Even those with hardly any followers yet, the more places that people are able to find your Facebook page, the easier it is going to be for them to watch the event. A lot of people overlook this tip.

8. Include details of the event in your email signature

It doesn't have to be a permanent change but adding details to your current signature for the run-up to your Facebook live video will increase awareness. You'll probably send hundreds of emails in the lead up to the event so why not use them to help?

9. Make your Facebook header a promotion for your event

It should be attention grabbing, creative and catch a user's eye. As long as the image can do this it doesn't need to be a picture of the event itself; it just has to promote it.

10. Promote your Facebook Live event to your email list

Mention the event in any newsletter as well as sending out promotional emails specific to the event itself.

11. Ask people to follow, like and share

Adding the Facebook 'Like' thumb to your post or ad might get some following you but actually asking people in the live stream to follow your Facebook page will help grow your following in time.

12. Record podcasts

If you have a podcast channel then record the event via another microphone to cross-reference live events on your podcast.

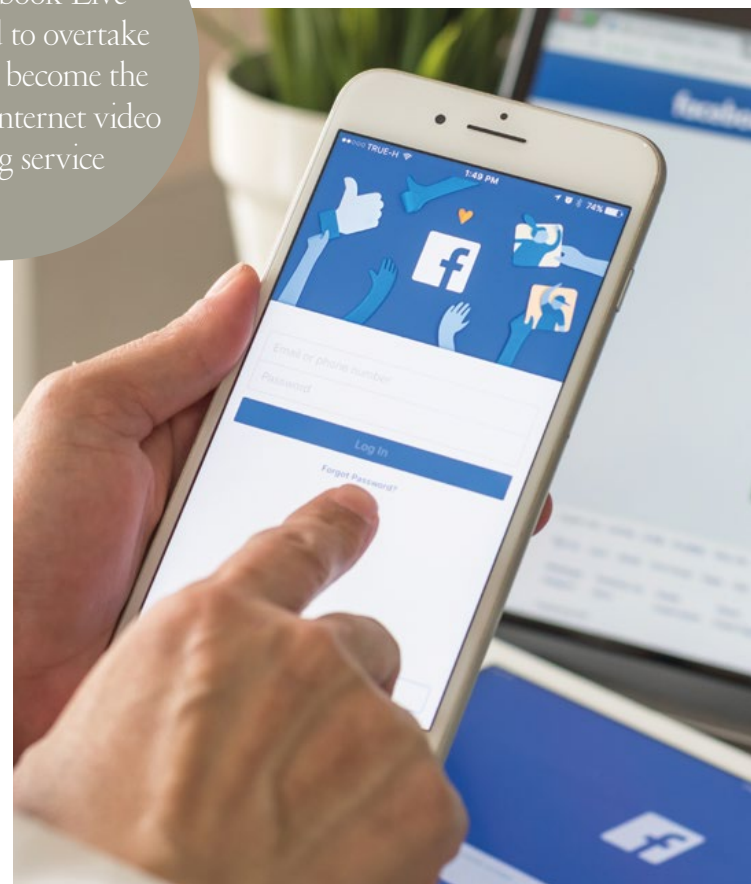
13. Get networking

Not just in the lead up to the event but afterwards as well. Continuing to refer to your live events gets the word out and the more you refer to it, the greater the likelihood others will mention it to their friends. Get colleagues and friends sharing your event on their timelines too.

14. Develop a theme

Creating some form of continuity between each live event instead of streaming one-off sessions will generate greater interest and awareness. When something is of interest to your audience, continuing the story into a series will get people tuning into the next session to find out what happens next. >

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15. Make connections with pages similar to yours

Get in touch with about twenty Facebook pages that are similar to yours and inform them of the event that you are about to host. Ask them if they would be willing to promote it to their followers and offer to do the same with any events they might be running.

16. Start sharing details of your event with Facebook groups

As long as the group allows it, this is a good way to increase awareness.

17. Promote across other social media platforms

Sharing information about the event via LinkedIn groups will help. Asking friends to tweet updates and a link whilst your event is going on lets people join in once it has started. Share concepts and ideas from the live event in bright and eye-catching pins to keep your brand at the forefront of customer minds.

18. Use your personal Facebook page to promote your live event

Don't go quite as heavy from your personal page as you might annoy personal contacts that aren't connected to your business.

19. Advertise on Facebook

You can target potential customers who might be interested in your live event using Facebook Ads. You can quickly increase your page following and the number of people who watch the live stream using this method.

20. Analyse the results

Once you've completed the live stream, take a look at the figures to understand how your audience felt about it.

HOW TO USE FACEBOOK LIVE

Using Facebook Live is easy:

STEP 1 – Go onto Facebook on your mobile phone

STEP 2 – Underneath the Status bar (the bit where it says "what's on your mind?") click the button that says 'Live'.

That's it. From this point onwards, Facebook uses your smartphone camera to stream a live video directly onto your newsfeed.



Once the live broadcast has finished, the video will be saved to your timeline. Some other benefits of using Live streaming are:

- It's free
- People can continue to like and share it as a saved video from your timeline
- You can 'boost' your saved live video for minimal cost

Before you start live streaming just check a few things first:

- Check your Internet connection (ideally Wi-fi) to make sure your stream is smooth. People will switch off if your broadcast breaks and jumps.
- Have a trial run and watch it back just to check everything works and there's nothing untoward in the background.
- Facebook Live has a streaming limit of 30 minutes so make sure you end it before your time is up and not halfway through your closing lines.
- When you're ready to go, please remember that in order to keep people watching (and ultimately increase your audience), share and give a lot more than you ask of your audience. So try not to spend more than 10 per cent of the session 'selling' and use the majority of the session for giving value.

It does take some effort to grow your Facebook Live audience and it won't happen overnight. But it's fun to do and a great way to engage with people that don't know you yet and deepen the connection with those that already do. **AM**



Jemma Edwards is the owner of deliveringdemand.com, helping aesthetics professionals and cosmetic surgeons get more patients and grow their practice.