



WORLD COM
Public Relations Group
The Local Advantage. Worldwide.

Best Practice Guide

How to manage Facebook pages for technology companies and keep control over content, user engagement and customer support

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Introduction

We are often asked by our clients for guidance on how to create and manage Facebook pages and what to consider when handling online communications in different regions. As a result we asked Worldcom Public Relations Group experts from around Europe and the US to respond to commonly asked questions.

The content of the Guide is based on the questions answered by our experts on a Webinar first aired in November 2016. You can listen to a recording of the Webinar by clicking on this [link](#)

We hope you find the Guide helpful. Further Guides will be provided for each of our other Technology Webinars.

If you would like to discuss any of the topics raised with any of our experts, please contact Crispin Manners @ crispinmanners@worldcomgroup.com

Our Partners enable you to design, deploy, track and evaluate communications campaigns that deliver outstanding results and sustained value. By working with Worldcom you can access a significant communications advantage whenever and wherever you need it. If you would like more information about Worldcom and its partners, please contact Todd Lynch, Managing Director @ toddylynch@worldcomgroup.com or call Todd on +1-212-286-9550.

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Panelists

GERMANY

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Should we have a single Facebook page or one for each territory?

USA - RORY

It really depends on what the company's business goals are. For instance, if they want to increase sales in a specific region or country, you will require just as much focus on that region as their main regional headquarters. It makes sense to set up a separate Facebook page for a specific region. This is especially important if the audience in that region speaks a different language as you will want to make sure that the messages are localised as well as published during their specific peak hours on Facebook.

If you do decide to set up Facebook pages in different countries and regions, ensure you have a local team that can support and manage the page. This team also needs to be prepared to respond to individuals in the target language.

GERMANY - MARIA

Definitely. Especially in Europe which is more diverse than the US. It is not only important to communicate in the local language, but also important to provide local content. You will need a team who can post content, answer questions or respond to requests.

There is not a "one size fits all" model especially when it comes to social media where you often deal with your audience on a private and personal level. It is essential to know your target in each country and communicate locally with them to show that you care. Wherever possible, we recommend setting up multiple Facebook pages.

As each territory has its own special requirements, you will need to create a Facebook page for each territory.

Providing localised, relevant content in the target language is important for your audience. You will also need a team who can post content and reply promptly during business hours.

If we have country-specific pages, should responses be in the local language?

You should not assume that your audience will have a great understanding of English. Therefore content and responses will need to be written in the local language.

Make it very easy for people to interact with your organisation. This will help you to build trust.

ITALY - DIEGO

Yes, of course. It is extremely important to show that the brand is close to its customers. Therefore, you must create a relationship with the customer base. In certain countries such as in Italy, not everybody speaks English therefore you would have to provide answers in Italian.

Even if companies decide to create one global page for all territories, there is an opportunity to localise the content. This is the direction that most big brands are heading towards and I would recommend the same method.

USA - RORY

Absolutely. If you go so far as to create a page for a specific region, you should post messages and responses in the primary language used in that region. Don't make customers guess or use Facebook translate as it adds another level of difficulty to the interaction. If the person started off frustrated, having to translate a response may only aggravate them further. Tailor your response as much as you can; this will create a more memorable interaction.

GERMANY - MARIA

Yes, even if the language is the same, you should localise the content. It is important that your customer trusts you. In Europe, you are less likely to build that trust if you adopt a single language global approach.

Should we have a single agency managing all pages across Europe or worldwide?

ITALY - DIEGO

It is not necessary to have a single agency managing all pages for different countries. It could be useful to have one agency coordinating the local pages to create consistency in look and tone of voice. To make this easier, we recommend that you use the same tools across the different markets for activities such as monitoring of comments or conversation management and reporting.

Additionally, you could have a situation where a piece of content from one of the local agencies gets picked up, converted by the global agency and distributed through the global channel. This would be good for scalability and enhance the sense of a global community.

GERMANY - MARIA

It is fine to have a global agency oversee the coordination of all the pages. This ensures that all content fits the same corporate design and that all the messaging through the communication channels are the same in all countries. Nevertheless, you need a local team for consistency and local stories – users will notice this and receive it positively.

USA - RORY

It really depends on whether or not you have teams in those regions that can support Facebook efforts and, that there is sufficient budget for social media efforts. If you have local skills and an adequate budget, then separate teams make sense, otherwise, you will have one agency that needs to accurately translate all messages and responses and monitor the pages in near real time as customers will expect speedy responses. This can be tough if you have a U.S. agency based on the East Coast trying to manage a Facebook page for Japan.

Messages can be translated accurately if there is a resource to do so, and can be scheduled via Facebook to go out during Japan's business hours, but monitoring the page to ensure comments are handled in a timely fashion will be tough. It can be done, but it will require a lot more time. Make sure if you have multiple agencies managing multiple pages that they are in sync about what is going out and when.

There are some advantages to having a supervising agency – particularly for consistency of message – but, the most important thing to get right is the interaction on each page. This needs to meet user expectations for local content, language and the timeliness of response.

It is unlikely that an agency based in a single time zone can meet the needs of pages in multiple time zones.

Should we have a company-wide protocol for managing Facebook pages?

USA - RORY

Yes. This will help keep social media managers in sync and aligned with business goals. Keep in mind, that even if there is a set protocol, every region is different with its own cultural norms. Those need to be taken into account. What works in one country doesn't necessarily work in another.

DIEGO - ITALY

Yes. The Facebook page represents one of the more intimate interactions people have with a brand. Therefore it is vital that all those managing pages, and contributing content to pages, have clear guidance on what is acceptable and what is not.

To maintain consistency and ensure all messaging aligns to business objectives, a company-wide protocol should be put in place.

Regional teams may adapt to the needs of their own market but their actions must be rooted in this protocol.



How would you use a Facebook page to drive sales?

ITALY - DIEGO

The ability to drive the users' attention towards other websites is useful and should be supported by a specific Facebook Ad campaign. You can drive traffic to all kinds of online sites, including: the company website, a micro-site with a specific call to action or your e-commerce site.

You can also trigger sales offline. We have found that you can drive traffic to physical stores in Italy. For instance, Casio, the creators of the G-Shock watch, launched their first Italian flagship store in Milan with a Facebook page supporting the shop. We promoted various events that drove traffic to the new store, which lead to significant sales.

GERMANY - MARIA

In Germany people normally purchase offline, therefore most users will take information from the website or Facebook page and then purchase at a store. This can make the analytics hard to track. There is a lot that you can do with Facebook to trigger sales offline. We had a high level of success doing exactly that for Fitbit.

USA - RORY

Every year in the US, we have fewer people shopping at malls and more people shopping online on sites such as Amazon. Therefore, brands in the US have been using Facebook to drive more sales. The new "Call to Action" button on the front of a Facebook page allows users to change the button to fit their own objective i.e. "Book Now" for appointments or "Download" for web based products. Facebook Ads can also be run to help increase conversions on your site, increase app usage, claim offers or drive traffic to your store. Over the last couple of years, Facebook has been catering more to the needs of local business, which is encouraging.

Obviously, the sales process will be different between a consumer brand and a B2B brand. If you have a B2B brand, a Facebook page would serve more as a way to increase awareness, educate buyers and generate leads rather than drive immediate sales.

Facebook can be very effective at driving immediate sales – both online and offline – especially when supported by a targeted Facebook advertising campaign.

In the B2B market, Facebook can help move people through the sales funnel by providing access to content and events that create sales leads.

How important is Facebook advertising to the success of the page?

Facebook Advertising has become a must as a result of changes to Facebook algorithms that make it harder for brand content to show up on Facebook News feeds.

While adverts will help, quality content remains the key to success. You won't get great results from poor content – even with a big d budget.

ITALY - DIEGO

Facebook Advertising is becoming a must. Due to the changes in the algorithms that Facebook is constantly evolving, all content needs to be promoted with a dedicated budget. This can serve as a great opportunity to boost content and have it take off for a relatively small budget. This type of direct payoff is not available in other types of media.

The content is also important. Quality still remains the key factor – you cannot get great results with poor content even if you have a big budget. Thus, the role of the social team still remains very important for the success of a campaign.

USA - RORY

It really depends on how well-known your brand is. Consumers tend to find well-known brands easily on social channels. If you're trying to grow awareness of your brand, social ads will help reach an audience you may not be able to otherwise.

However, even if you are a well-known brand, if you're trying to grow awareness of a new campaign or product, Facebook Ads will help get the word out there. This comes on the heels of the recent changes to Facebook's algorithm making it harder for brands to show up in their followers' news feeds.



Do you think Facebook pages work in a B2B market?

GERMANY - MARIA

In Germany, it is good to have a corporate page to communicate with customers and also improve your employer brand. Additionally, a Facebook page can be used to increase brand awareness and even for recruitment – a trend which is growing in Germany.

For B2B brands, a single global page may suffice as it is generally accepted that you communicate in English in technology markets. A page is helpful, but not essential. Other channels such as LinkedIn, Xing and Twitter are used more in the B2B market in Germany.

ITALY - DIEGO

Yes. We have found that business professionals behave like consumers. They like Facebook and spend a lot of time on the platform. For BOSCH, a company that supplies tools to other businesses, we created and manage a Facebook page that targets carpenters and plumbers about professional power tools. Through the page, we identified topics that combine brand values with the various interests of the target audiences..

USA - RORY

Facebook is not our first choice for B2B communications. However, we have a number of high tech B2B clients that have seen success on Facebook such as IBM and Cisco. They are bigger brands but have separate pages for their business units which help the brand reach a larger audience. You just have to make sure you understand the audience you're trying to reach on Facebook and create compelling content that speaks to that audience. Leveraging social ads also helps you build your presence online.

If you are a B2B brand and you want to decide if you should have a Facebook page, then research the audience to understand how they use Facebook and other social channels. This varies by sector and territory

A page for a B2B company can be used to communicate with your audience, increase brand awareness and possibly aid recruitment.



What role should our Facebook page play in delivering customer care?

Some customers may see Facebook as the preferred channel for communication with a brand.

As a result, Facebook can be very effective at providing front line customer care.

Facebook can also act as a barometer of consumer sentiment and enable a brand to detect and handle emerging problems before they escalate.

ITALY - DIEGO

Facebook can be a good tool for customer care, on two different levels. First of all, it can be an initial contact point to manage first-level enquiries that can be redirected to the external customer care service that the company already has.

Secondly, if the company has a dedicated social team, and a dedicated tool for comments and enquiries monitoring, Facebook can be a very effective customer care platform that can detect emerging product issues so they can be handled before the “escalation effect” which is typical of online conversations.



How should we respond if we receive negative comments about products on our Facebook page?

USA - RORY

We recommend that a brand does not delete or ignore a complaint on Facebook. Unless the comment is abusive, profane or shares confidential information, we recommend acknowledging all comments. Before responding, make sure you read the comment and really listen to what the person is trying to say. That will help you develop the response. All responses should be tailored to the person and not read like a standard response.

Never be afraid to apologize if your brand is in the wrong. If you need to send a free product to replace the existing product, do so. This builds trust with the person and hopefully will help you to keep them as a customer for life. Make sure you both feel like a resolution has been reached. If the dialogue was taken offline, close off with the customer on Facebook, as well, to show other customers that it was resolved.

It is important not to delete negative comments unless the content is inappropriate or abusive, as this will undermine trust in the brand.

If you are at fault, always apologise. Apologies help to build trust in the brand and will take heat out of the situation.

Always try to see the situation from the consumer's point of view before replying.

Ensure that the loop is closed on Facebook to show others that the issue was resolved.



A Facebook page can be a key communication channel during a crisis. With its reach, you can use a page to deal with customer problems and comments.

A separate crisis management policy is not necessary, but social media should be a key part of every crisis policy and procedures.

How would you use Facebook in a crisis? Should we have a separate Facebook crisis management policy?

ITALY - DIEGO

We find that failing to resolve issues or poor customer service can be the root cause of certain crises. Unhappy clients who do not receive an adequate response – whether in timing or effectiveness – often come to the page and leave rude and negative comments. In the worst case, they engage with other unhappy consumers and create a movement that can lead to further problems.

Therefore, managing customer support is important. The real solution is to be prepared and have a good customer service team that can tackle all issues on social media effectively. Ensure you have a crisis management plan ready for the instance a crisis arises. It is important to not only know how, but also when to react. Some companies have suffered by reacting too hastily or overreacting to negative comments.

We usually recommend that companies communicate on the same platform as the audience – creating a dedicated Facebook page for a crisis is recommended as well as responding with a video if the crisis arises on YouTube.

USA - RORY

Like any other communications channel, such as a website, blog or email, you will want to leverage Facebook to relay what is happening in a crisis. Approved corporate messages should be posted on Facebook and, if there is a blog post or release with more information, you should link to that. You should monitor Facebook more frequently than usual to ensure comments are responded to in a timely fashion using approved messages. Once the crisis is resolved, make sure everyone knows. Open, honest communications is highly recommended in these cases.

We don't recommend having a separate Facebook crisis management policy. For consistency's sake, we recommend having an overall crisis management policy, but factor Facebook into that, much like you should all other social networks.

How would you measure the success of a Facebook page?

GERMANY - MARIA

I would recommend using Facebook's own system. It is quite easy to measure performance on Facebook as it has a very good metric system. It is best to align Facebook metrics with the key business and communications outcomes the company is trying to achieve.

USA - RORY

Facebook Insights provide a lot of great metrics. You can easily define success by a certain engagement rate or a number of video views, but these really need to be tied to business goals.

For instance, if you want to increase sales by a certain percentage, you can look to clicks on the CTA button to see how many you received and how those may have increased sales. The same goes for social ads that help drive sales. Think about your business goals and think about the Facebook metrics that tie to those business goals. Set a goal for those metrics and look to improve them month-over-month.

Facebook Insights provide a number of helpful metrics.

The most important thing to do is to align Facebook activity with business goals and assess how well the Facebook activity has contributed to delivering the desired outcomes.

If you would like to discuss the content of this document, or its recommendations, or to talk to one of our experts about your communications needs, please contact: Crispin Manners crispinmanners@worldcomgroup.com

or

If you would like more information about Worldcom and its partners, please contact Todd Lynch, Managing Director @ toddlynch@worldcomgroup.com or call Todd on +1-212-286-9550.

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