



# Facebook Fundamentals

## The Nuts and Bolts of Facebook for Communities

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Facebook is a great way to connect with current and future residents. This eBook outlines what you need to know to maximize the use of Facebook in your property management business.

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## What Is The Difference Between a Profile Page, Groups, and a Business Page?

### Profile Page

A profile Page is a personal account. Connections are called “friends” and although there are privacy settings, this is the most personal type of Facebook account. Profile accounts do not have analytics to measure the success of the posts or to understand the demographics of the other Profiles you are connected with. A Personal Page is restricted to 5,000 friends and messages can only be sent to 20 people at a time.

### Groups

Facebook Groups are best for hosting quick and active discussions and attracting quick attention. A Group is a Facebook Page that represents a group of people with a similar interest that have opted-in to receiving updates from other members of the Group by joining. Some Groups are closed, meaning they are private and membership is controlled. Groups also do not have analytics and restrict the number of members to 5,000. Groups allow you to message all members.



## Business Page

Facebook Business Pages are generally better for long-term relationships with fans, prospects, and residents. A Business Page on Facebook represents a company or a professional account. This type of Page provides connections called “Likes” or “Fans.” This type of connection allows the Fan to maintain personal privacy because access to individual profile Pages is limited. Otherwise, Business Pages are very similar to Profile Pages because they allow pictures, videos, and applications. What makes Business Pages ideal for businesses is the ability to measure success using the analytics provided within the Facebook Insights application. Facebook Business Pages allow an unlimited number of fans but no direct messaging ability. Messaging is restricted to notifications but many people do not regularly check their notifications inbox.

**Note:** Facebook terms of service stipulate that users are prohibited from engaging in commercial activity from a personal profile Page. Businesses are not allowed to create profile Pages, but in the event they have, it is possible to convert the Profile Page to a Business Page.

## Getting Started: Building Your Facebook Page

Before you build the community’s Facebook Page, consider the following questions:

1. Why does my community need a Facebook Page?
2. Who will administer the Page?
3. What information do we want to share?
4. Who will be our Fans? Residents? Prospects? Both?
5. How will we respond to negative posts on our Page?
6. What are our goals?
7. How will we get people to “Like” our Page?

### Why does my community need a Facebook Page?

- Facebook is easy-to-use and appeals to people of all age groups
- The average Facebook user is connected to over 80 Pages, Groups and Events
- Pages appear in Google Search
- Pages increase visibility of the community online
- You can link to and from your company website with [vacancy listings](#)
- Pages can be managed by a single person or management can be shared
- Engaging in conversation with the prospects and residents to improve the community
- Your competitors are using Facebook to communicate with the local target audience and market their community

92% of fans say that since becoming a fan of a given brand, they are more likely to recommend that brand to their friends. 36% of fans say that since becoming a fan of a given brand, their desire to buy from that brand has increased.

~Wildfire Interactive, Inc. 2011

### Who will administer the Page?

Someone at the community should take part in administering the Page. Residents and prospects will recognize your online personality and match it to the person they know in the office. Real questions

about daily activities may be asked, or questions about the local area. It is important that someone from your community responds to these questions in a timely manner. Choose the right person for this job by evaluating the team's most socially active person. Who has the most number of relationships at the community? Who has the most number of friends, residents, vendors and local connections on Facebook?

*Note: The community's corporate office should have administrative access to the Page at all times.*

## What information should be shared on a community Facebook Page?

The average Facebook user spends 7 hours per month on Facebook. They look for interesting or relevant information for their daily lives. Facebook is an opportunity to connect with the real community online. Encourage the staff to fan the Page, comment, and share information. From local community events to the apartment community events, people like to be informed about what is taking place nearby.

The average Facebook user spends 7 hours per month on Facebook.

Create a set of guidelines for using the Page and post them in the information section of the community Facebook Page. Think of this as a user rights and responsibilities agreement. An example of user guidelines:

"We appreciate the opportunity to share our community Face Book Fan Page with our friends, family, residents, and community. Feel free to share 'G' rated material on our page, as we encourage our residents and their families to participate. Please respect the basic rights of other users of our page, including their individual privacy. We reserve the right to block and remove users that violate these basic rights (harassment, foul language, inappropriate photographs or videos posted, phishing of data, and unapproved marketing to our fan list.)"

Other information, such as alerts or warnings can be shared on Facebook. If you can make communicating with your team easier, they may come to the Page and share updates with other residents as well.

## Who will be our Fans? Residents? Prospects? Both?

Every community is different. By targeting the residents first, and establishing a good online relationship with the residents, prospects will naturally gravitate to the Page. Otherwise known as "organic," this type of word-of-mouth marketing is very successful over time.

It is completely possible to target prospects with Facebook. With marketing tools such as Facebook Ads and Facebook Marketplace, there have been some successes in leasing. However, the most frequently used way to target prospects is with contests and lead-generation forms.

## How will we respond to negative comments on our Page?

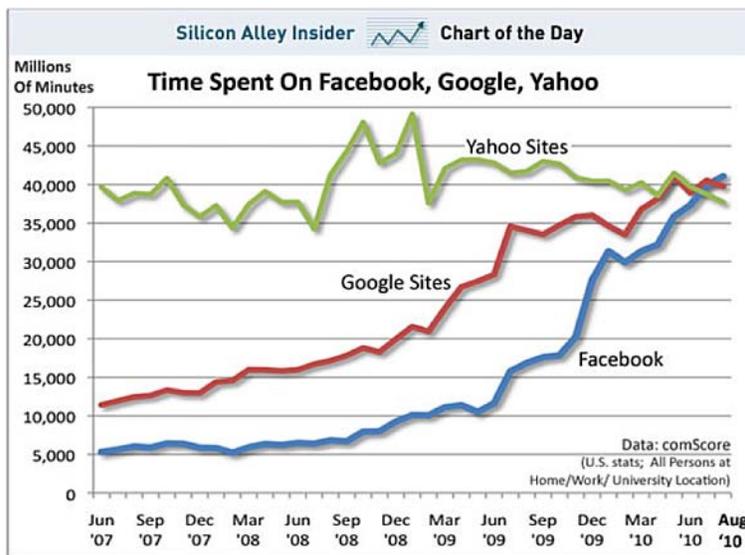
The first step is to maintain professionalism. Do not be offended or threatened by negative commentary. Ask if the comment is a valid concern? Is there a real problem or is the comment unwarranted? Unless the comment is vulgar and abusive, respond professionally.

If there is a valid concern brought up on the community Page, acknowledge the concern with honesty and integrity. Believe it or not, the response should include a sincere “thank you” as well as a solution to the problem presented. Common complaints include trash, parking, and pet waste. Be prepared to take the heat and commit to resolving the issue with senior management.

If the concern is without merit, address the situation head on. This is a rare occasion, but it does happen. The most common of these issues are out of your control. For instance: frozen sidewalks in an ice storm, utility issues such as water main breaks and electrical outages. Other situations can include an angry former resident. In very rare cases you may need to escalate the concern to senior management or even seek legal advice.

### What are our goals for using Facebook?

What is the main goal of using Facebook? Does your community need occupancy or resident retention? Is the goal to build relationships or are you looking for input to improve the community? Are you focusing in making the lives of your residents easier by sharing important news with them?



As a part of the property management marketing plan, setting goals will help in creating a schedule for using Facebook. Additionally, establish the metrics you will use to determine success. Will it be the number of people that “like” the Page? Will it be the number of impressions or the percentage of feedback? Is it click-through rates to the website? Whichever you choose, be prepared to review and adjust goals accordingly.

### How will we get people to “Like” our Page?

Once you’ve created the page, let the residents know first! Place flyers on bulletin boards, signs near common areas, and include the notice during every conversation with residents and prospects.

Spread the word with local area businesses and vendors. [Update your website](#) and ILS ads to market the new Page. Share coupons on the Facebook page for prospects. If the community is using a coupon on Facebook, remember to accept the coupon from a mobile device.

Events are a great opportunity to build the fan base AND spread word of mouth. Share resident events on Facebook and request RSVP's to attend. Community parties, lease-up events, and resident activities are great events to start with.

Contests are another effective way to spread the word about the Facebook Page and increase the fanbase. Pet contests have been the most effective contest to-date. Have residents post their pet pictures and vote for the cutest pet!

## We've Built a Page, Now What?

Most people will only visit a Business Facebook Page once unless there is a specific reason to go to the Page, (i.e. contest, event, etc.). If the person "likes" the Page, most interactions (Likes, Comments) will take place from their own News Feed rather than the Page.

### Capture Attention

Create a Page that captures attention immediately, and give people a reason to like the Page without reading through the entire Wall. An effective way to do this is to build a landing tab. There are several solutions for building landing tabs, including Pagemodo and FanPage Engine.



Be sure the Page is unique and represents the community. Avatars, or profile pictures, and bios will matter to people investigating the Page.

*Note: Using pictures of a property sign or community logo is not as effective as using faces of staff or residents.*

### Photo And Video Tagging Is Important

Photo and video tagging is very effective. Ask residents to upload and tag photos from apartment community events to your page. Once a user tags someone in photos taken at your community, that photo is then visible on the Facebook Page, to all of their friends, and even to their friends of friends!

### Engage With Your Local Community

Look to the local community around the property. Events, festivals, shopping, deals, things to do, renovation updates, new employee introductions, specials for renewal and referral; these are all things that people who live in your apartments might care about. On top of that, you're looking for news stories, interesting online sites, or other content that would be useful to those around you. Feel free to ask the Page fans what they would like the community to share online.

Engagement  
on Facebook  
is higher on  
Thursday and  
Friday.

~ BuddyMedia

In conclusion, try to stay on schedule and check the Page daily: morning, noon and afternoon. It may be a good idea to post within the information tab what hours staff will be available to assist via

Facebook. Monitor the community Page and competing community with HyperAlerts. This free tool will send notifications of activity taking place on any page you register.

Status updates 80 characters or shorter are “liked” and shared 27% more frequently than longer posts.

~ BuddyMedia

## Happy Residents Spread the Word

The online trend is growing. From communicating online to paying rent online, it is important that your community is available to meet the needs of your residents. Happy residents will spread the word about your community online and off line. By building a page you are providing the community with a place to connect and share.



### About the Author

Charity Hisle is a social media consultant, speaker and trainer. After several years in the printing and Multifamily (apartment) industry, she developed a love for social media marketing and became excited about the implications of leveraging social media marketing for small business. In an effort to generate awareness, she established an engagement training blog and became a full-time social media consultant as [Socially Engaged Marketing, LLC](#).

### About AppFolio

AppFolio provides web-based property management software that helps you grow your business. Our customers find and retain better residents faster, increase profitability and love the ability to work from anywhere. AppFolio also provides educational resources for property managers including free webinars and articles on our [PropertyManager.com](#) online magazine. You can learn more about AppFolio at [AppFolio.com](#).