

Using Facebook to market your business: What you need to know

Promoting your business is essential to acquiring new clients and keeping your current database in the loop with relevant special deals and updates. To do this through adverts and promotions is often costly and perhaps not something your travel business has budgeted for. Luckily there is a cost effective alternative, Facebook. We're sure most of you reading this use Facebook in your personal capacity, but did you know that it's also a powerful tool to promote your travel business? Here FlightSiteAgent shares an update on everything you need to know when using Facebook for business.

Get started: Starting a Facebook business page is free, easy to manage and quick to set up. All you need is a Facebook profile. If you're unsure of how to go about this, see [here](#) for a step-by-step guide. It is important to know that you can only boost posts and create ads for business pages.

The value of a Facebook business page

The value of a Facebook page, or any social media business account, doesn't depend on its ability to potentially attract new customers but rather the ease and affordability with which you can share your content with others. Whilst it is a great tool to communicate with your existing audience, Facebook's value primarily lies in its ads services. Unlike traditional advertisements, Facebook allows you to specifically target an audience that either matches people who have already shown an interest in your business or those interested in your competitors.

Ad options available on Facebook and what to know

You can spend money in three ways on Facebook. They are:

1. **Facebook ads:** This option can be found in the dropdown menu on the right-hand side of the main menu under the heading "Create Ads".
2. **Promoting your page:** This option can be found on "page management" and is relatively easy to do.
3. **Boosting posts:** This is an option that you'll find at the bottom right of each post. The point of boosting a post is to amplify the reach of a particular post. Posts about special offers, airline sales, amazing packages and important updates are worth boosting. When targeting your post boost, it is a good idea to choose those who already like your page as Facebook won't necessarily show each post to them organically (without payment).

Choose an Ad Type Based On Your Primary Goal

Now that you are aware of all the Facebook ad options, it's time to consider your goal in order to choose the best type of advertisement and avoid disappointment. First you'll need to ask the following questions:

- **Do you want to speak to your fans?** Keep your followers up to date with the latest on special deals and business updates by **boosting these posts**. This will help to amplify your reach and engagement on all posts. To manage your posts, select "Ads Manager", found at the top right.
- **Do you want to increase your brand awareness?** To let more people know about your travel business and the great travel deals you offer, create a **brand awareness ad**.
- **Do you want to increase your page likes?** Do this by either creating a **page ad**, which targets a custom audience of all your existing clients' email addresses, or skip the ads altogether and invite your friends and family to "like" your Facebook business page. Don't rush this process

as there is no real marketing value in having more followers, especially if they aren't clients first.

Ad Content

The type of content you want to promote is entirely up to you, but typically posts that feature captivating images and text that is to the point, perform well.

Aside from the general posting rules, you can't boost a post containing an image with more than 20% text (excluding infographics, magazine covers, etc.).

For more information on Facebook's advertising policies see [here](#).

Tips on selecting an audience

You can either create a "custom audience" which refers to people that have already interacted with your business i.e. through newsletter sign-ups, using a Pixel (Cookies) for website visitors, etc. Or you can create a "lookalike audience", which refers to people on Facebook who are similar to your most valuable audience.

Your targeting could also be more general. You could target people according to location (country, city, province or suburb) potential clients who either live in a specific location, have recently visited your location or someone who has travelled to this location. It could be a country, province, city or suburb. This is an incredibly valuable option for those in travel industry, who often have self-drive deals or other specials only relevant to those departing from a specific destination. When correctly targeting your ads you're ensuring that you are only talking to the most relevant people. This will improve your chances of making a sale as well as make your fans feel that you have their best interests in mind.

If you feel geographical targeting isn't enough, then you can take it one step further and add other criteria such as demographics, interests or behavioural attributes. This allows you to target people who follow your competitors. Do bear in mind that the more criteria you add, the more possible matches there will be as someone only has to match one of the parameters to be eligible.

If you know your target audience well, then it is worth playing around with this tool. If you are unsure, rather be inclusive than exclusive and avoid potentially missing out on someone who doesn't fit into the parameters you've just pulled out of thin air.

Ad Placement

You can choose where you want your Facebook ads to display. Ads automatically display on both Facebook and Instagram, however you do have the option of choosing one or the other.

In Facebook there are also multiple positions in which your ads can display. Typically ads perform better in the newsfeed than in the right-hand side column, as this area is reserved for ads and usually overlooked.

Payment and How Facebook Bidding Works

The minimum spend is R10 per day and Facebook requires you to enter a total budget for the ad. So if you set your budget to R30, you can boost or advertise for a maximum of three days. You can set

the duration of the ad by either selecting the options 1, 7 or 14 days or you can choose the ad's end date.

Once all the boxes have been completed, it will direct you to "check out" where you will choose your payment method. You only have to load your credit card details once and it will then save it for quick and easy use in the future.

Facebook then uses your agreed budget to bid on your behalf in order to display your ads to your chosen audience. However, because you are competing with other advertisers with similar audiences, Facebook will often not spend your entire budget. It's advised to leave your ad delivery optimised for post engagement as you don't want to spam users multiple times a day.

You're invited to play around with the rest of the service, but it's usually best to leave it up to Facebook when it comes to deciding on times to show your ad.

The great thing about Facebook is that it's easy to use and, by spending time on the platform, you'll soon be able to familiarise yourself with various nifty features that will help get your travel business exposure and ultimately sales. For more information on how to use Facebook to market your travel business email us on info@flightsiteagent.co.za and we'll gladly assist.

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