

Facebook Best Practices for Nonprofit Organizations



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1) Configure your Page's "Settings" to allow more participation.

The ability to build community is essential in order to have a return on your investment (ROI) when using social networking sites, and you can't build community on Facebook if you don't allow your fans to participate on your Page. This will mean that you are going to have check your Page more regularly for rogue comments, but that is a small price to pay for increased community participation and ROI.

To allow maximum participation on your Facebook Page, go to "Settings" on the home view under the "Share" button and:

View Settings:

- 1) Default View for Wall :: Posts by Page and Fans
- 2) Default Landing Tab for Everyone Else :: Wall or [Custom Tab](#)
- 3) Auto-Expand Comments :: Check

Fan Permissions:

- Check :: Fans can write on the wall
- Check :: Allow fans to post photos
- Check :: Allow fans to post videos
- Check :: Allow fans to post links

2) Use your organization's logo as your Page picture.

Your organization's logo a.k.a. avatar has never had more value than it does in the era of Web 2.0. People recognize your logo on Facebook on Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, Change.org, Flickr, etc. first, your organization name second. Make sure the use of your logo/avatar is consistent on all your social networking profiles.

3) Put "http://" before all Web sites in "Updates".

"Updates" are similar to e-mails that you can send to your fans inside of Facebook. Make sure that you have the "http://" in front of all Web site URLs [such as <http://www.wildaid.org>] that you list in your Update so that the link is automatically hyperlinked so that individuals can visit the website with one simple click. You'd be surprised how few Page Admins know this little trick. People will not copy and paste www.wildaid.org into their browser for example, thus you are losing a valuable opportunity to increase your Web site traffic via Facebook Updates.

4) Ask your pre-April 2009 fans to opt-in to receive your "What's on your mind?" Status Updates.

The best practice is no longer applicable.

5) Add and use the "Links" App.

The [Links App](#) allows you to add links to your Status Updates. The Links App comes with all Pages automatically. Don't delete it and use it with every Status Update.

6) Ask questions to spark conversation and activity on your Page.

Facebook Pages were designed to inspire comments and thumbs up by your fans. A good strategy to increase activity on your Page is to pose questions in Status Updates. People will then reply answers on your Page giving it more dynamic, community-driven look and feel.

7) Add the "Causes" App for fundraising, but don't just limit your organization to using Causes for Facebook fundraising.

The [Causes App](#) allows nonprofits to fundraise on Facebook. Your organization [must be in GuideStar.org](#) for you to be able to use Causes. Donations are processed by Network for Good and JustGive.org. There is a lot of potential with Causes for fundraising, but as of June 2009, the median gift through Causes is \$25 and the vast majority of nonprofits have received no donations through Causes. In fact, on average you can

expect 2 cents per Cause member. Also, keep in mind that Causes does not currently provide the e-mail address of donors to the nonprofit organization, so it will be tough to thank and further engage donors via Facebook Causes.

Therefore, don't just limit your fundraising on Facebook to using Causes. Make sure you add the [Static FBML App](#) and use it to add a "Donate Now" button to your Facebook Page as well.

8) Add the "Notes" App and feature it as a Tab if your organization does not have a blog.

This [Notes App](#) essentially allows you to run a blog on your Facebook Page. Like a blog, notes are listed chronologically and fans can comments and give thumbs up. I use "Notes" to announce the "Nonprofit of the Month" on the [Nonprofit Organizations Facebook Page](#) and feature Notes as a Tab. Just in case you haven't noticed, Tabs can be dragged and dropped.

9) Add the "Social RSS" App and featured it as a Tab if your organization does have a blog.

The best practice is no longer applicable.

10) Add the "Static FBML" App and learn basic HTML.

The [Static FBML App](#) is one of the most important Apps on Facebook. It allows you to add new boxes to your page that can include text, links and images as long as you have a basic working knowledge of HTML ([View Basic HTML Tutorial](#)).

11) Using the "Static FBML" App, add Web 2.0 Icons to your Page.

Thanks to Change.org, adding Web 2.0 icons to your Facebook Page has become as easy as copy and paste. 1. [Login to your Nonprofit Account](#) on Change.org, go to Admin Dashboard > Get HTML for Web 2.0 Icons. Insert the links to your various profiles on Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, etc. and then copy the code that Change.org automatically generates for you. 2. Then using the [Static FBML App](#), add a new box and then paste the Web 2.0 icons code and hit Save. The new Web 2.0 icons box will show up under your "Boxes" Tab. From there you can then "Move it Wall Tab" to have it show up on the home of your Facebook Page. See the [Nonprofit Organizations Facebook Page](#) as an example.

12) Select a username that matches your organizations website.

In June 2009, Facebook started allowing Page Admins to select vanity URLs for Facebook Pages, such as [www.facebook.com/nonprofitorgs](#). You need 25 fans to reserve a username. Grab your vanity URL ASAP at [www.facebook.com/username](#) if you have not already. Ideally it should match your organization's website address or other social networking vanity URLs.

13) Add the Fan Box Widget to your website or blog.

To grab a [Fan Box Widget](#), login as an Admin to your Facebook Page and under the logo on your home view you will see the link "Add Fan Box to your site". On that page you can grab code for a widget that you can embed on your organization's website or blog that will display the status updates on your Facebook Page, thumbnails of your fans, as well as a "Become a Fan!" button. If your organization is investing time and energy into building your Facebook presence, then a Fan Box widget is a must. See the [Sierra Club](#) website and the [Children's Defense Fund](#) website for live examples of the widget.

14) Use the "Favorites" function to build partnerships on Facebook.

Each Facebook Page has a link under the logo on the home view named "Add to my Page's Favorites". Use this functionality to build and foster partnerships on Facebook. If a foundation recently gave your organization a grant and they have a Facebook Page, then "Favorite" them on your page and post a comment on their wall letting them know that you made them a "Favorite." If your organization has numerous chapters throughout the country, then favorite each one on the Facebook Page for the national office. On the Nonprofit Organizations Facebook Page, I use the Favorites function to highlight the [Nonprofits of the Month](#).

15) Have more than one administrator for your Page.

Protect your organization by making sure that you have at least two staff as Admins for your Facebook Page. If a staff person or volunteer leaves, and there isn't a second person named as Page Admin, then you have essentially lost access to your Facebook Page and your hundreds/thousands of fans.

16) Add a Twitter Tab to your Page.

Make sure you are logged into Facebook and designated as an Admin for your organization's Facebook Page. Go to [Involver's App Gallery](#) [You can install two of the basic Apps for free]. Click the Facebook Install button for Twitter. It will ask you to choose which Facebook Page you want to install the App. Select your page and then click the "Add Twitter for Pages" button. You will then be prompted to enter your name, email address, phone number, and Twitter User Name. All four fields are required.

Click "Save & Continue" and then "Continue to Fan Page". The final step is to click "+ Add a new tab" on your Facebook Page, then Select "Twitter". The Twitter Tab will automatically appear. You can then drag and drop your Tabs in the order you think it most important for your Facebook Strategy. Keep in mind that the default settings are that the "Wall" Tab is first, the "Info" Tab is second. [[See the Involver Twitter App live](#)]

17) Add a YouTube Tab to your Page.

Simply repeat the steps above! You will not be prompted to enter your contact information again, however you will be asked to enter your YouTube User Name (www.youtube.com/username) and whether you want only your uploaded videos or your favorited video displayed, or both. That depends on how you use your YouTube channel. Most organizations would likely only want their uploaded videos displayed. [[See the Involver YouTube App live](#)]

18) Drag and Drop your most important Tabs.

The default setting on facebook is that your Wall and Info Tabs must remain and be in the first and second position on your Page's Tabs, but the remaining four Tabs can be dragged and dropped to feature your most important Apps. For the [Nonprofit Organizations Page](#), I currently feature Twitter, YouTube, Notes and Links in my Tabs. A month from now I may move them around again. Keep your Tabs fresh and change them around every once in awhile!

19) Limit your Status Updates to one or two per day.

It's a good thing that there is no way to sync Tweets to Status Updates on Facebook Pages or nonprofit organizations would be losing a lot of fans on Facebook. The fans of the [Nonprofit Organizations Facebook Page](#) have made it quite clear that more than one Status Update a day from your organizations, and you're in the realm getting unliked, or at the very least "Hidden". You can get away with two Status Updates a day as long as one is in the morning and the other is in the afternoon. The law of diminishing returns kicks in after that. [View Poll](#).

20) Add the MyFlickr App.

The best practice is no longer applicable.

21) Use TwtPoll to engage your fans.

Every once in awhile create a poll on [TwtPoll](#) and post it as a link in a Status Update. Most everyone now understands that successfully using social media for your organization means engaging your fans, followers, and friends. In addition to asking your fans to take the poll, ask them to share their thoughts on the issue of the poll in the Status Update thread as well. TwtPolls work great on Twitter too!

22) Add Share Buttons to your blog and website.

When it comes to communications on Facebook, 90% of the power is in the News Feed. The more often you can get your content to show up in the News Feed of your supporters on Facebook, the more [ROI your organization](#) gets from utilizing Facebook. Thus, integrate Facebook Share functionality into your blog and website by going to your Fan Page Home > Edit Page > Promote with a Fan Box (on the right) > Share (on the left) and then copy and paste the code. Such as:

[Share299](#)

23) Link to the mobile version of your Facebook Page on your mobile website.

65 million people (as of November 2009) view [Facebook on a mobile device](#) monthly. That's one out of 5 Facebook users. Half of those users view Facebook on a mobile device daily. Currently, few nonprofits have mobile websites, but that is going to change dramatically in 2010-11. DIOSA Communications is a firm believer that the Mobile Web is the next frontier in nonprofit communications.

Smartphones users can access Facebook through Apps, but the majority still access Facebook through a mobile browser. So, make sure that you link to the mobile version of your Facebook Page (m.facebook.com/nonprofitorgs) on your mobile website (www.nonprofitorgs.mobi).

24) Incorporate your Facebook Page into your e-newsletter.

The reality is that the vast majority of Facebook Pages by nonprofits (99.9%) do not go viral on Facebook. Only those with international brand recognition tend to go viral, such as NPR, Greenpeace International, and World Wildlife Fund (the top three nonprofit Pages by number of fans as of November 2009). For most other nonprofits, the big challenge is getting new fans and there is no magic formula for that.

The truth is you have promote the page to get new fans... a lot. In my experience, most of my new fans come from mentioning and asking people to fan the page in e-mail newsletters. And I stress "ask". Some will fan the page if they see a [Facebook icon](#) in your e-newsletter, but most need to be prompted: "We only need 86 more fans to reach 1,000 on Facebook! Please help us reach our goal by becoming a fan!" The benefit is that if they do become a fan, then you have the ability to engage them daily on Facebook via Status Updates, whereas in an e-newsletter you can only engage them once every 7-14 days... depending on how often you send your e-newsletter.

25) Create Customized Tabs.

Advanced Facebook strategies requires advanced tech skills. If you know HTML and have a good graphic designer, then you can use the [Static FBML App](#) to create and completely customize Tabs on Facebook Pages. For example, the "Get Involved!" Tab on the [Special Olympics of Northern California Facebook Page](#) and the "Of the Month" Tab on the [Nonprofit Organizations Facebook Page](#) were created using the Static FBML App.

If you don't know HTML and want customized Tabs for your Facebook Page, then you have two options: 1) Pay for a service like [Sprout.com](#) or [Involver.com](#). Neither publish their fees online for customized Tabs which usually means they are too expensive for most nonprofits. It doesn't hurt to ask for a nonprofit discount though. Many of these new services want exposure and buzz. 2) [Hire someone](#) who knows HTML and Facebook.

26) Create a customized Tab for your default Landing Tab.

When you click on Central Michigan University inside of Facebook it goes to a a customized Tab called [Unleash the Power](#). First impressions are important on social media sites, and this page sends a clear message that CMU gets Facebook and is taking it seriously. Compared to other pages by universities of their size, they are definitely doing much better in terms of number of fans. My guess is that this strong first impression is making a significant difference in building their fan base.

Greenpeace International has also set their default Landing Tab to a customized Tab called [Take Action](#). Definitely a best practice. The California State Parks Foundation gets even more creative with a Landing Tab called [New Fan](#). Once you have created a customized Tab for your default Landing Tab, simply go into "Settings" on your Facebook Page and under "Default Landing Tab for Everyone Else" select the Tab you want for your default Landing Tab in the pop-down menu.

27) Link to the mobile version of your Facebook Page in text alerts.

Now that [group texting is incredibly affordable](#) for most nonprofits, launching a text alert campaign is essential. Send out a text alert asking your subscribers to "Fan" your Facebook page, but make sure you link to the mobile version of your Facebook Page i.e, m.facebook.com/nonprofitorgs. As of today (January 27, 2010), [65 million people access Facebook on mobile devices](#) each month. You can bet a good number of your fans view your Status Updates on their mobile device(s). Those that aren't yet will if you text them your Facebook Page!

28) Ask your Fans to "Suggest to Friends" on a monthly basis.

Post a Status Update and send an Update to fans asking them to suggest your page to their Facebook friends. Let them know that they can easily suggest your page by clicking the "Suggest to Friends" link just under your Page's image in the left column. Inspiring your fans to help build your community is one of the easiest ways to quickly grow your fan base. Ask every month.

29) Integrate Facebook into your online donation "Thank You" web page and e-mail.

Most nonprofits direct online donors to a "Thank You" web page after they make a donation. Make sure you include a "Join us on Facebook!" pitch on this page, as well as in the "Thank You" e-mail that is automatically generated to online donors.

30) Ask fellow staff, board members and volunteers to regularly give Thumps Up and post Comments.

The News Feed on the Facebook Home has two versions: 1) Top News and 2) Most Recent. All Status Updates from Facebook Pages show up in the Most Recent version. Only Status Updates with 5 or more Thumbs Up and Comments show up in the Top News version. Thus, to increase your organization's presence in the Top News Feed, ask fellow staff, board members and volunteers to regularly give Thumbs Up and post Comments. This will also help inspire your fans to get more active on your page. Please Note: "5" is a low guesstimate of Facebook's mysterious News Feed algorithms. Sometimes it takes 5 Comments.

31) Promote your nonprofit's Facebook Page on the Nonprofit Organizations, Non-Profits on Facebook, and Facebook for Good Pages.

Once a month or so, post a link to your organization's Facebook Page on the walls of the Pages listed below. It won't increase your fan base by large amounts, but you will get a few new fans from time to time... and maybe on Facebook's radar:

www.facebook.com/nonprofitorgs
www.facebook.com/nonprofits
www.facebook.com/facebookforgood

32) Experiment with Facebook Advertising.

DIOSA Communications (me) recently ran a [Facebook Advertising Experiment for Nonprofit Organizations](#). And while the experiment did not [result](#) in any new fans, it did make me a better Page Admin. Each organization is different. Your ad may work. One important idea that came

out of the experience is a Google Grants-like program by Facebook for nonprofits. Thus, I created the [Call to Action: Facebook Should Launch an Ads Grants Program for Nonprofits](#) Facebook Page. Hope you become a fan!

33) Update your Facebook Note Box at least once a month.

Located directly under your Page image on the left side of your Page is a Note Box. Make sure you update this box at least once a month with content that is timely to your organization and interesting to your fans. It could be used to promote a new campaign, a powerful statistic, or a call to action. It's also a best practices to use [Bit.ly](#) to link to website. See the [Nonprofit Organizations Page](#) as an example. You must have the "http://" in front of a link for it to work.

34) Rotate your avatar/profile image every couple of months.

The vast majority of interaction between your organization and your fans occurs in the News Feed, not on the home/Wall view of your Page. That's why 90% of the power of Facebook is in your Status Updates. Rotating your avatar/profile image every few months could prompt your fans to visit the home/Wall view of your Page and Tabs (where you hopefully have [donation and e-newsletter subscribe](#) information). Just make sure that the various versions of your avatar/profile image include your logo. See [EcoViva's Avatars on Flickr](#) as an example.

35) Integrate Facebook into your online petitions and e-mail advocacy campaigns.

If you are an advocacy organization that utilizes online petitions and e-mail campaigns, then make sure you add Facebook [Share Buttons](#) to all your online petitions and e-mail campaigns - both on the home page and the landing page (after a supporter has signed on). Also, on the landing page, add a plug to have the supporter "Like" your organization on Facebook. See the [landing page for a Forest Ethics online petition](#) as an example.

36) Add Google Analytics to your Facebook Page.

If you really want to know how many people visit your Facebook Page, then sign up for a free [Google Analytics](#) account. Next download [FBGAT](#). Then follow the steps [here](#) to add the tracking code to your Facebook Page. Basic [HTML](#) knowledge is required.

37) Claim your organization's Community Page.

Odds are your organization has a [Facebook Community Page](#) though in some cases it may not be easy to locate. Find it, claim it and link it to your organization's Official Page! This is crucial because Facebook Community Pages often [trump Official Pages in Facebook Searches](#).

38) Promote your Facebook Page on other Pages using the "@" functionality.

You can post Status Updates on other Pages in two steps: 1) "Like" the Page that you want to post on. 2) Post a Status Update from your Page with an "@" in front of the name of the Page you want to post on. For example, I Liked [WildAid](#) and then posted the following Status Update on the Nonprofit Organizations Page:

Sadly, the Panna Tiger Reserve in India is now tigerless [<http://pannatigerreserve.net>]. The last of the tigers were poached for their fur. Less than 3,000 tigers remain in the wild worldwide. Via [@WildAid](#) :: <http://www.wildaid.org>

By using the "@" functionality this Status Updates was also posted on [WildAid's Facebook Page](#).

39) Post powerful stats and inspirational quotes.

This also works very well on Twitter! Powerful stats make people think and often have the power to shock your supporters into action:

Less than 700 mountain gorillas remain in the wild. [Please donate \\$10](#) to help protect the world's remaining mountain gorillas from poachers!

And though long-time communicators may feel that inspirational quotes are a bit of a communications cliché, the online masses love them:

"Activism is my rent for living on this planet." - Alice Walker

40) Get professional training on how use Facebook!

Knowing how to use social media in your personal life is quite different from knowing how to use it professionally. Training is essential for launching and maintaining a successful social media strategy for your organization. Be sure to take DIOSA's Webinar on [How Nonprofit Organizations Can Successfully Use Facebook and Facebook Apps](#).