



Facebook

Founded: 2004

Users: 500 Million

Website Worldwide Rank (traffic): 2

Harvard University students Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes, and Eduardo Saverin founded Facebook. It served as an online platform for students to meet each other, keep in touch, and share information. Since then, it has ballooned into a multi-billion dollar business with a global reach.

Facebook allows users to keep in touch with “friends” – which can include family members, coworkers, acquaintances, and classmates. Each user creates and maintains an individual profile and can post updates. Updates can be text, pictures, links, or video showing what the users has been doing, thinking, or watching. The user’s friends can then comment on those updates. Successful updates often generate many comments and spur online discussions. Users can also become “fans” of businesses, brands, as well as – most importantly – causes and nonprofit organizations. By becoming a fan, users signal to their friends that they support your organization’s cause. Nonprofit organizations can also send messages to their fans, invite them to events, and users are able to read an organization’s updates. Facebook has a history of changing the privacy policy for its users without advance notice. Many of these changes have been received negatively by its users and the press. While privacy issues remain a top concern of Facebook users, this has not impeded Facebook’s growth.

What It’s Good For

Facebook’s intuitive interface and centralized design means that setting up a page for a

nonprofit organization is both simple and straightforward. Its huge user base and constant media attention also means there is a very shallow learning curve – chances are good that many staff at your organization already use Facebook extensively. There is also very little education that you will need to do for your audience.

Facebook has many strengths. For nonprofit organizations, these strengths include the following:

Awareness Building

As Facebook continues to grow in ubiquity, a nonprofit page ensures that users will be able to find your organization. A page will allow your organization to connect with your supporters where they spend their time. It will also give your organization a further opportunity to spread the word about the benefits of the Weatherization Assistance Program.

Driving Conversation and Feedback

Given Facebook’s comment features, its users are comfortable and willing to provide feedback on an organization’s updates. Fostering conversations through open ended questions and provocative updates is a key method to keep your Facebook fans engaged with your organization.

Driving Traffic

Current research suggests that Facebook users are becoming more comfortable leaving the confines of the site to read links, information, and articles. Nonprofit organizations can take advantage of this flexibility by creating updates that feature links back to their website.



Event Attendance

Facebook's event tools allow you to spread the word easily about upcoming events to fans of your page. While it does not offer ticket sales functionality, for free events it can be a good way to track attendance. In order to be effective, an organization must have a large group of local supporters who have already become fans.

Fundraising

Currently, it seems unlikely that Facebook will ever become a core part of a nonprofit organization's fundraising strategy. However, Facebook does allow 501(c)(3) organizations to create a "Facebook Cause" which will allow fans to solicit donations from their friends on behalf of organizations they support. Given its low response rates, this should be seen more as another avenue for awareness building rather than a source of operating funds for your organization.

What It's Not Good For

While Facebook can be a powerful tool for nonprofit organizations to engage supporters, it has significant drawbacks and challenges which nonprofit organizations must overcome in order to be successful.

Message Control

Engaging in a robust conversation online is a double-edged sword. It is critical to gauge your organization's comfort level with your message being reinterpreted by hundreds if not thousands of individuals across Facebook's platform. It is also important to have clear guidelines for dissenting opinions and a firm plan for dealing with off-topic and offensive comments.

Online Advocacy

While some peer-to-peer fundraising is possible on Facebook, online advocacy remains a core deficiency in Facebook's architecture. Time and again, Facebook's users have proven unwilling to leave the confines of the platform to sign petitions, make phone calls, or other advocacy-related activities.

Consistency

Facebook's suite of tools are subject to change without advance notice. This can present a challenge for staff tasked with maintaining and updating a page. While Facebook's core functionality (user profiles, friends, updates) tend to stay constant, the way that users interact with organizations and pages often changes. It is important to stay abreast of changes by monitoring Facebook's official blog: <http://blog.facebook.com/>.

Tone

Facebook users are used to interacting with their friends, who often share (or overshare) the details of their day-to-day lives. As an organization is it important to strike a balance on Facebook, maintaining a professional standard while creating a warm and conversational tone. Updates to fan pages should be brief, open-ended, and written in a way that spurs online discussion. Asking questions, referencing current events, and linking back to your organization's website will help your fans stay engaged.

Posts & Comments

It is important to monitor comments on your organization's updates and respond as appropriate. While it is never a good idea to engage in a heated back-and-forth with angry users on any online forum, you can consider



providing links to reputable, external sources that refute wildly incorrect information. Often, Facebook pages become self-correcting with your most supportive users taking it upon themselves to correct false comments. Be sure that you have ample information available to your supporters if this begins to occur.

Staffing

In order to maintain a robust presence on Facebook, we recommend that an organization plan on devoting approximately 2-3 days to set up a page, define the strategy, and solicit a core group of fans. After that, the pages should require approximately 2-3 hours of staff time per week. This time typically breaks out in the following ways:

- 1 hour – creating 1-2 updates per week and linking them to relevant content
- 1-1.5 hours – monitoring comments and participating in conversations



While not the largest social networking platform, Twitter has attracted a great deal of attention and popularity due to celebrities using it as a promotional platform.

Twitter

Founded: 2006

Users: 190 Million

Website Worldwide Rank (traffic): 10

Twitter grew out of a meeting of employees of the San Francisco-based podcasting organization, Odeo Inc. Since then, it has become a leader of so-called “microblogging” where users post very short updates frequently.

Twitter allows users to post 140-character updates, known as “tweets.” These tweets are

text-only but often have links to external websites, including blogs, photos, video, and articles. Unlike Facebook, aside from the name and what the user adds to the profile, there is no functional difference between a Twitter profile for an individual and an organization. Users can connect with other Twitter users by “following” them. Unlike Facebook, this is not a reciprocal relationship – there is no technical requirement for a user to follow an individual who follows them.

Twitter grants users, including organizations, significant leeway in designing a profile page that matches their brand. The short update length is a double-edged feature – it both makes many updates easy but also means that each tweet lacks the nuance of longer-form media.

What It’s Good For

Twitter’s low-impact structure and short updates allows for considerable flexibility for nonprofit organizations. Some of Twitter’s core strengths include:

Broadcasting Messages

Due to the way Twitter connects users, it is possible for organizations with many followers to push out a message to its followers without the back-and-forth conversation of many other social mediums. Twitter also allows users to “retweet” messages verbatim, which means that your tweet can travel far beyond the confines of the group that follows your profile.

Engaging with Constituents & Like-Minded Organizations

Twitter’s short update length makes frequent updates easier. When leading up to an event or occasion, this feature can be particularly effective, as you can dribble out multiple ‘teaser’ posts linking back to your website.



HOW-TO GUIDES

SETTING UP A FACEBOOK PROFILE

Pages are the main way that nonprofit organizations maintain a presence on Facebook. Pages need to be maintained by an administrator, who is a Facebook user. This user can be either the main staff person tasked with updating the Facebook page, or a dummy profile created for the sole purpose of being the administrator of the Facebook page. (Creating a profile on Facebook is a very simple process requiring only an email address.) Make sure you allow mail from Facebook to get through your mailbox filters.

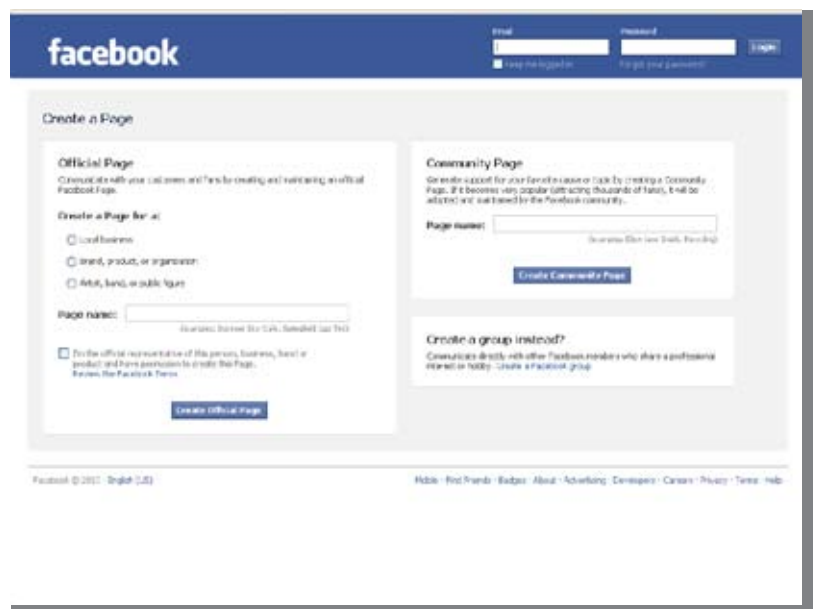
Once you have created a profile page, you will be emailed a confirmation link. Click the link and you will be redirected back to Facebook.

SETTING UP A FACEBOOK PAGE

1. Log on to Facebook.com using the account of whomever will be the page's administrator.
2. From the main homepage, click the "Create a Page" link located on the bottom right-hand corner.
3. You will be given two options "Official Page" or "Community Page." Under "Official Page" choose create a page for a brand, product, or organization. A drop down menu will appear with a few options. The two options that will be relevant to your organization are either "Government" or "Nonprofit." Choose the one that best fits your organization.

4. In "Page name" put in the name of your organization. If possible, do NOT use the acronym – write out the entire name.
5. Click the box next to "I'm the official representative of this person, business, band or product and have permission to create this Page" and click the "Create Official Page" button. [Note: make sure a staff person has been assigned to create this page and given authorization to use either a general email address or their work email address to set up the page.

Your page should look like this:



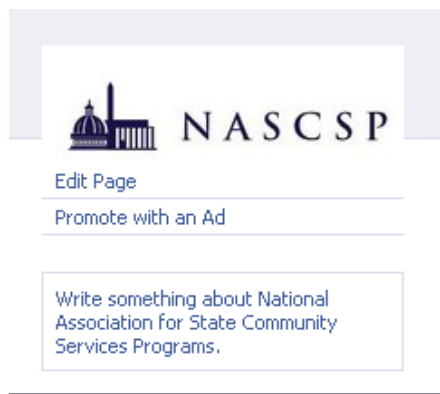
Profile Picture

On the top left-hand corner you will see a giant question mark – that is where you can upload a profile picture. Roll your mouse over the question mark and a button that says "Change your Profile Picture" will pop up. Click the button and a few more choices come up. Click on "Upload a Picture" and choose your organization's logo.



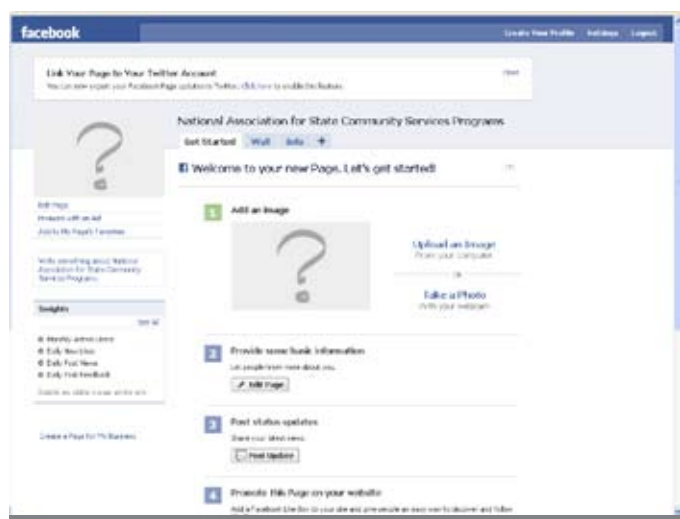
In order to best fit into Facebook’s design, we recommend that you use a square or nearly-square execution of your logo, or center other shapes on a white background.

Here’s the image we uploaded for NASCSP’s Facebook page:



••••• Tabs

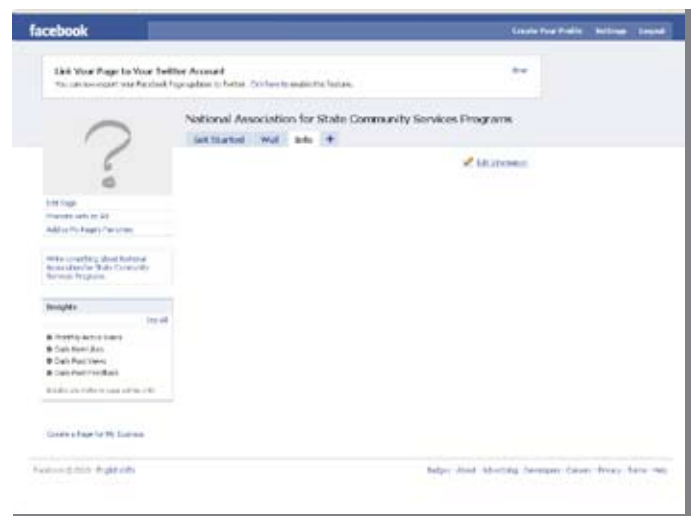
Back on the main page, you will see your organization’s name. Underneath that, there are a number of tabs: Get Started, Wall, Info, Photos, Discussion. Click the “Get Started” tab.



You will now see a few options: Provide some basic information, Post status updates, Promote this Page on your website, Set up your mobile phone, Send status updates to your Twitter followers. Let’s start with “provide some basic information.”

••••• Provide Some Basic Information

1. Underneath “Provide some Basic Information” is a button that says “Edit Info.” Click on the button. Your screen will now look like this:



You may have noticed how the “Info” tab at the top is now highlighted. The “Edit Info” button redirected you to this tab. In the future, you can edit your info by clicking the “Info” tab at the top.

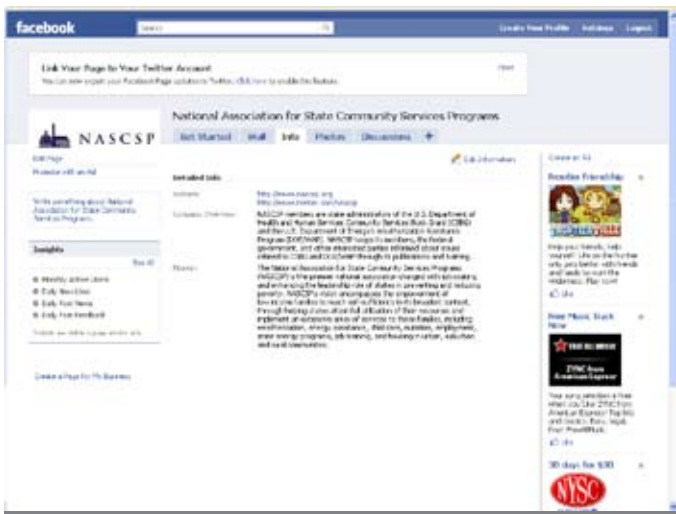
2. Put in the year your organization was founded and click “Save Changes.”
3. Once you’ve clicked “Save Changes” a new field will open up where you can put in more detailed information. There are four text boxes: Website, Company Overview, Mission, Products.
4. For website, include your organization’s official website and links to other social networking sites.

- In company overview, include some basic information about your organization and what it does.
- Mission: add your company's mission statement here.

After you're done, you should have a page that looks similar to this:



- Save your changes and click the "Info" tab on the toolbar again. This is how visitors to your Facebook page will see the information.



Post Updates

On Facebook you don't need to use bit.ly to shrink links or worry about 140 character limits (for more about bit.ly, see page 19, section "Making Links Shorter"). That said, you should still aim for short and concise messages.

To post an update with a link: Write your text in the box. To add the link, click on the link button underneath the text box and paste or type your link and click "Attach." If there are multiple pictures on the page you posted, you will have the option to choose one of them as your thumbnail for the post or choose no thumbnail at all. Follow the same procedure to post a link without text, a video, or pictures. See below:



To delete an update, scroll over the update. On the right-hand side a button that says "Remove" will pop up. Click it and the update will disappear.

Promote this Page on Your Website

Clicking on this will create a "Widget" code that your webmaster can use to put it on your website.



Send Status to Your Twitter Followers

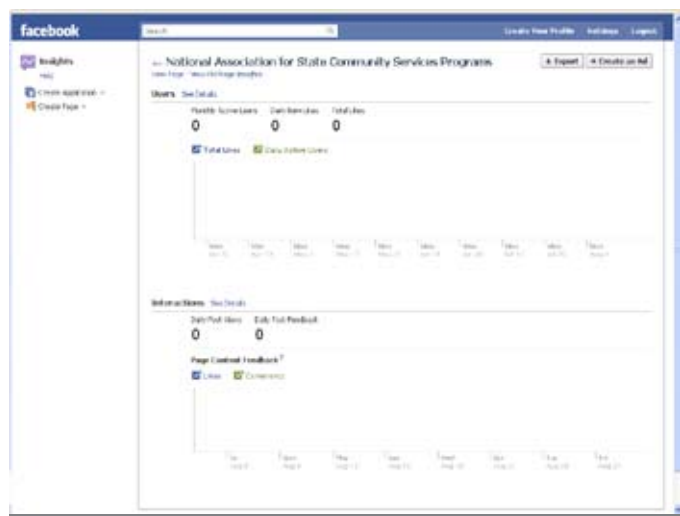
Both Twitter and Facebook have made it possible to connect both of your accounts so as to cross-post from both sites, meaning, any tweet you post on Twitter will also show up on your Facebook page and vice-versa. This allows you to use the same content to reach both audiences.

“Write Something” Box

This box, located underneath your profile picture, is another space which allows you to provide more information about your organization. You can choose to write in it or leave it blank.

Insights

Underneath your profile picture, you will see a box that says “Insights.” This box functions like a web analytics tool which tracks traffic on your Facebook page. You’ll be able to monitor how many users joined per day, how many visits you’ve had, and how many people have responded to your posts. You can export your insights into an Excel spreadsheet by clicking the “Export” button on the top right-hand corner.



HOW TO FIND FACEBOOK FANS

Unlike a Facebook profile, where you are able to “add a friend,” you cannot “request someone to become a fan” of your page. If you try to add someone as a friend, they will see your dummy Facebook profile (the one you set up in order to create your Facebook page). You are also not able to search for users in order to make them fans.

There are ways, however, of attracting people who will be interested in your fan page. Here are some ways you can promote your Facebook page:

1. Put a Facebook widget or a link to your Facebook page on your organization’s website.
2. Tell your Twitter followers or followers on your other social networking sites about your Facebook page.
3. Visit Facebook’s “Promoting your Page” section, which has tips about ways you can attract fans to your Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=1029>.

Another great way to attract fans is to place your Facebook profile badge or url on other outgoing communications. These can include email signatures, email newsletters, print newsletters, and other print materials.

FACEBOOK URL

Unlike Twitter where you get a Twitter.com/yourorganizationhere URL, in Facebook you aren’t able to get a Facebook.com/yourorganizationhere URL until you have more than 25 fans. Until then, your URL will be something like Facebook.com/pages/Your-Organization-Here/extra numbers.

For more information on Facebook’s best practices for nonprofit pages, visit <http://www.box.net/shared/tgft7ujmsp>.