

Draft v2 suggestions for using Facebook for Marketing

The objective of this document is to explore the opportunities that Facebook, as our prioritised social media platform, can give the Basingstoke - Old Basing u3a to achieve 3 objectives:

1. Increase the retention of existing members.
2. Attract new members.
3. Help create a consistent identity.

We need to attract new members to both backfill those leaving and provide growth. They also bring in the possibility of new Group Leaders either as part of succession planning or new topics to enhance the experience u3a for existing members. New Committee members is another useful consequence of new members. Without new members we will start to decline. Currently the biggest provider of new members is family and friend referrals, but we can use the tactics shown below to get wider exposure on the internet.

Using Facebook to achieve those aims.

The first thing you need is **content**. It is suggested that each site needs at least 3 posts per week, to achieve this we will need to get full buy in from the Group Leaders. Focusing on Group activities, rather than trying to sell the concept of the u3a in the first instance, on the Public Facebook page may be more successful as people often search on activities, they are interested in. Group Leaders and group participants should be encouraged to create content from the many groups and activities we do monthly. We should encourage current membership to follow our Facebook pages to increase their exposure to activities.

Suggested content and its uses.

- Private Facebook page – this is used to retain existing members
 - Provide stories on what is happening in the groups to encourage people to join more groups to make them sticky.
 - Provide information on new groups.
 - Facebook includes an events section that allows you to showcase upcoming events. You can include the date, time, and location of an event, a cover image, and a description to help explain who the event is for and what will be covered. This will encourage people to join new groups as they know what is happening. We should ensure that our monthly meetings, chatter and natter and new member meetings are advertised on Facebook as a minimum.
 - Add value by providing information from central u3a, non-u3a activities happening locally.
 - Create content that allows people to comment and express views.
 - Overall promote our events and activities
- Public Facebook page – helping existing members feeling part of a wider community and make potential new members aware of activities:
 - All of the first three on private Facebook page but with a different style, i.e. no mentioning of u3a member personal information.
 - Use items in “**Improving the structure of posts for maximum effect**” below.
 - Create another mechanism for drawing people onto the website to contact our membership secretary.
- Using third party Facebook pages to post information:

- To increase the volume of searches that bring up the Basingstoke u3a, we should place information about our activities on other sites, for example:
 - Spotted Basingstoke
 - Spotted Hatch Warren and Beggarwood
 - Spotted Oakley
 - Spotted Popley Basingstoke
 - Chineham Community
 - Basingstoke & Deane District News
 - #Whats on in Basingstoke
 - Events in Basingstoke and surrounding villages.
 - The Kempshott notice board.
 - Etc

Use our own Facebook pages to like the above sites, to encourage them to like our content too which will increase the search results.

- Actions to ensure success are:
 - Agree the type of content we want to post
 - Complete an extensive list of sites to post on
 - Agree who should post and how frequently

Improving the ease of access

To keep the organisation safe, it is recommended that all posts on both our private and public site are reviewed by admin before posting. However, an easy mechanism should be created to allow people to make the initial post on both sites, rather than having to go outside the platform to do so, such as email. More work is required to see how Facebook pages can work (see Appendix 1) A minimum of 4 administrators should be in place for both sites to ensure things are reviewed in a timely manner. The BBVA believe it is unlikely that we will have too many issues with trolls as this is not the case for small charities especially non-controversial ones such as ours.

Are negative comments an issue?

If we get conversations going, there is no doubt that we may get negative comments. We should not shy away from these as it is a good way of 1. Understanding what members think. 2. Responding quickly to concerns, so that other members can see our ethos of responsiveness. Timely response is important another reason to increase the number of administrators.

Improving what we have

Our Facebook profile represents our organisation. It's vital that ours is complete with a profile picture, a cover photo, a description, contact information.

The current Facebook changes would benefit from some changes:

- The branding on both Public and Private pages should be the same. This will help when they are being searched for online. It will also help us with our identity, it should be on all posters, flyers etc and perhaps even using it on the website. This is the small circle on both our Facebooks which is currently different.
- Our picture takes up a lot of space and does not achieve anything for us. Perhaps think of rolling pictures of the clubs or word clouds. Whatever we do should show a statement of our intent,
- There should be a contact us click through button that does not just take you to the home page of the **website**. A suggestion is that even on the website we have a contact us button that gives the ability to contact via e-mail, form and phone as this gives more opportunities for people to interact how they want to.
- **Complete the "About" section.** Google grabs content from your About section, so make sure we have completed all fields. Most important are our web address, physical address, contact information, and keyword-rich description.
- Make your posts visual. According to Buzzsumo research, Facebook posts with images receive 2.3 times more engagement than those without. All member images need consent.
- Keep the text short. People tend not to spend much time reading posts on Facebook, so the shorter and snappier, the better. Make sure your text contextualises your image, but don't go overboard.

Improving the structure of posts for maximum effect

We would benefit in changing the structure of the posts we do to make them more engaging and to ensure that they come up in internet searches.

- Each post should have a header which is interesting and includes key words for example: Basingstoke u3a Book Club had a lively debate during our latest meeting or Basingstoke u3a Book Club had a blast
- Or has a question – did you know that there really was a leper colony off the coast of Crete, as covered in the latest book reviewed by the Basingstoke u3a Book Club?
- Most posts should have a call to action at the end, such as, if you want to join the Book Club and are not yet a member of the Basingstoke u3a go to the website and click on the contact us button on Basingstokeu3a.org etc

Timing of posts

It is suggested that each site needs at least 3 posts per week and we also need a degree of scheduling by the administrators to ensure that they are not all posted on the same day. This is to

encourage people to look up our Facebook page, if they are private users and not seeing the alerts. Given Facebook's algorithms, it is impossible to ensure that our members automatically see all posts.

Tips for extending the people we communicate with

- Use hashtags, up to about five, this increases the number of times your group will come up in search. For example: # What's on in Basingstoke, #Basingstoke Clubs, #Hampshire Business, #Basingstoke club. If our club is very niche then expand out to a wider geography.
- Try to get your posts on other people's specific searches, for example #Milestones Museum if you tag them, this notifies them of your existence, and they may want to share information about you to reach their followers.
- When the u3a admin people see sites they like on Facebook, like them, this may mean they like you and again it expands the virtual network you are setting up.

There are different types of posts we should encourage people to post. The more photos and video's the better.

- Educational
 - how to
 - fun facts
 - Information i.e., National days, data coming from central u3a
 - What the groups are doing
- Motivational
 - Member went to France not just u3a trips but tell us a bit about our members lives, showing we are interested and invested in their lives. We should decide if we want to confine this just to the private site
- Relatable
 - Conversational
 - What about using polls to get more information such as what theme area would you like to see more clubs, do you run clubs for other areas?
- Entertaining
 - Fun stories from the team
 - Photographs
 - Meet the team – do people know the Committee members or Group Leaders?

Do's and don'ts

- Use social media to promote our u3a and its activities and events.
- If you receive unwelcome messages think before you reply. Ask yourself would your message offend or hurt anyone?
- Do report any content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on Bradford u3a to the Communications Group
- Report any content which raises a safeguarding concern in line with the procedures outlined in the Basingstoke u3a Safeguarding Policy

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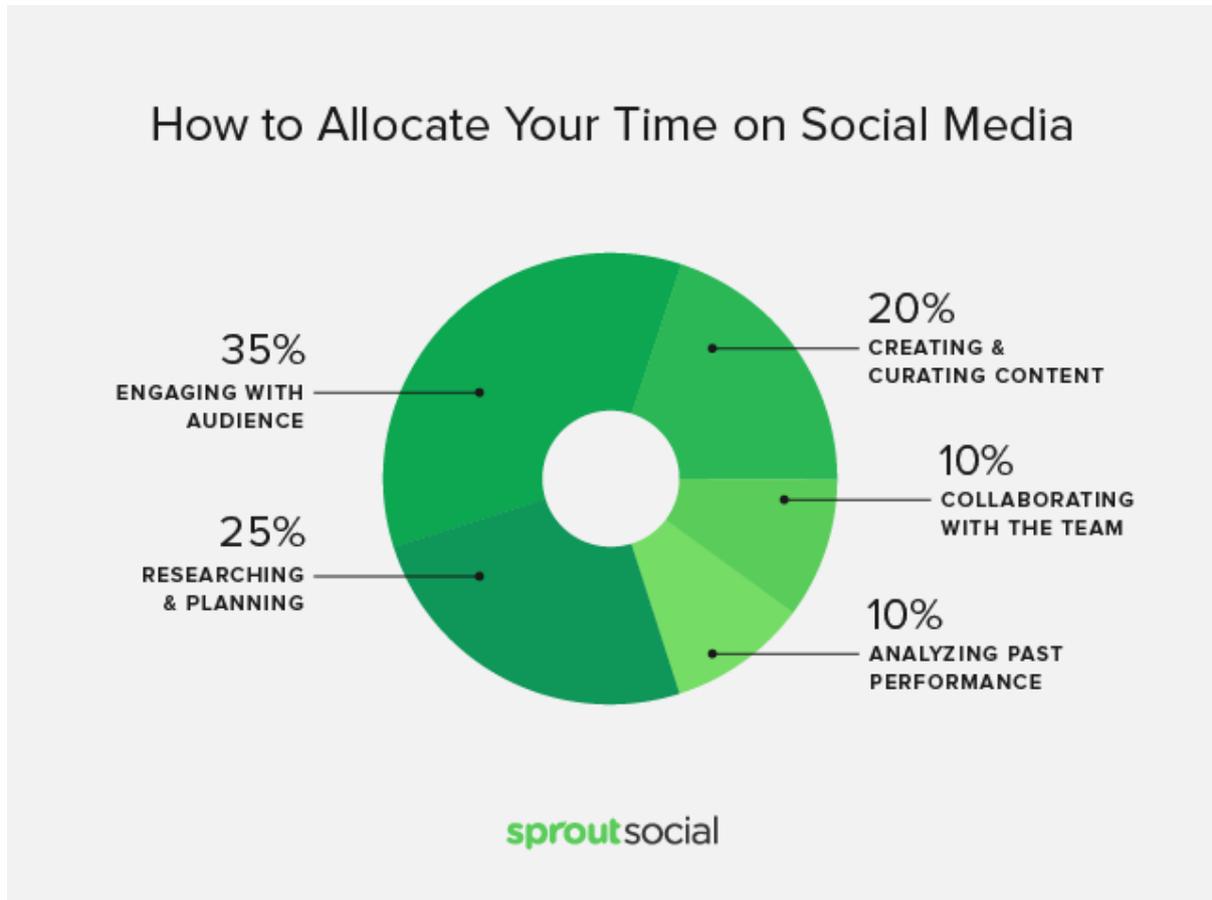
Don't

- Include personal or confidential information regarding the u3a or any member such as photo's names etc without permission
- Tag any vulnerable adult or anyone under the age of 18.
- Circulate or repost chain letters, other spam, commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations is also prohibited.
- Use social media in a way that breaches any of our other policies such as equality and diversity, data protection, safeguarding etc.

Is it working?

We should consider setting up the tracking option so that we can get data on what is viewed and responded to, this will give us useful information on what works and what could be improved.

Suggested allocation of resources



Call to action:

1. Make our public Facebook page accessible without sending emails – but have admin to protect our brand.
2. Appoint four - six administration staff.
3. Brief group leaders on the best format for posts and encourage them to capture their activities – even if they don't want/need new members of their group
4. Get agreement on which GL's are happy for us to turn their posts on the Private Facebook to the Public Facebook after necessary modifications. Ensure all administrators are aware of those that do not want this to happen.
5. Change branding on both sites and consider linking to website branding
6. Update Facebook profile
7. Compile a list of sites we want to post onto and tag and who will be responsible for ensuring that some posts are made. This does not need to be formal but it helps to ensure that we made the most opportunities for exposure utilising not sub-committee people For example: GL for Local History, or Transport History asked to post monthly to the Milestones Museum etc
8. We should appoint a Facebook lead, who is part of the Marketing sub-committee in our u3a to help drive the above after the initial push has died down.

- 9.** Administrators should have a role to bring content in from other sites and websites that is useful for our membership
- 10.** We should aim to complete these activities by May so that we increase the number of interactions over the Summer as our renewals process kicks in
- 11.** Advertise via newsletters that we want to use Facebook more and encourage current Members to follow our pages.

Appendix 1

A Facebook Group is a place for group communication, letting people share their common interests and express their opinions. Groups let people come together around a common cause, issue, or activity to organize, express objectives, discuss issues, post photos, and share related content. Anybody can [create and manage a Facebook Group](#), and you can even join up to 6,000 other Groups.

Groups, as discussed below, are not the same as private group messaging used in [Facebook Messenger](#).



Quick Facts About Facebook Groups

Here are some short tidbits on how Facebook Groups work:

- Any Facebook user can make a group.
- Some groups let anyone join, but others might be private.
- When joining a group, whether private or public, your Facebook friends might see that you've joined it.
- Some groups are secret and can't be searched for, in which case a qualifying group member has to invite you.
- Leaving a group will not notify the other members.
- Only the creator of the group, and anyone they make an admin, has the power to invite someone to a group.
- You can create events, upload pictures and videos, and share files within a group.
- Groups can be deleted by removing all the members.
- Group admins can invite people to become Group Experts; experts have a badge next to their name and can help spread credible information to the group.

Facebook Pages vs. Groups

Groups on Facebook have undergone changes since they were first implemented. There was a time when a user's groups would appear on their own personal page. So, if you were in a group called "Football Fans," everyone who could see your profile would know this about you.

Now, however, those types of open forums are known as [Facebook Pages](#), created by companies, celebrities, and brands to engage with their audience and post interesting content. Only administrators of Pages can post to the account, while those who like the Page can comment on any posts and pictures.

You use your personal profile to engage with other Page users and group members. Whenever you post something, you're posting with your Facebook profile's name and photo.

Unlike Facebook Pages, which are always public, a Facebook Group doesn't have to be. Many Facebook Groups are closed; you submit a request to join the group and have access when an admin approves you. Only other members of a private group can see your posts, questions, and comments. (More on this below)

On the other hand, if you comment on or like a Page, all of your information will be available to anyone on Facebook who looks at that Page.

So, if someone were to visit the NFL on CBS Facebook Page, they could see anyone who was commenting on a photo or discussing an article. This could cause some privacy concerns, especially if you don't have a solid understanding of how to use [Facebook's privacy settings](#) to protect your personal profile.

Closed Facebook Groups

A Group can be more private than a Page because the creator has the option to make it closed. When a group is closed, only those invited to the Group can see the content and information shared within it.

An example of a Facebook Group might be team members working on a project together and want to communicate with one another more efficiently. By creating a Group, the team is given a private forum to share ideas on the project and post updates, just like with a Page.

Still, all information is shared only with those within the group once it's made closed. Others will still be able to see that the group exists, but they won't be able to see its members or any posts or information within the closed Group unless they are invited.

Secret Facebook Groups

Even more private than the closed Group is the secret group. This type of group is exactly what you would expect it to be: secret. Nobody on Facebook can see a secret group other than those in the group.

This group will not appear anywhere on your profile, and only those within the group can see who the members are and what is posted. These groups could be used if you are planning an event that you don't want somebody to know about, or if you just want a secure platform to talk with friends.

Another example might be a family who wants to share pictures and news on Facebook but without other friends seeing everything.

Public Facebook Groups

The third privacy setting for a Group is public, meaning that anyone can see who is in the group and what has been posted. Still, only members of the group can post within it.

Networking: Groups vs. Pages

Another way groups are different from Pages is that they work on smaller networks than the entire Facebook network. You can limit your group to the network for your college, high school, or company, as well as make it a group for members of any network.

A Page can accumulate as many likes as possible. Facebook doesn't set a limit on the number of group members you can have, but after a group reaches 5,000 people, there are some restrictions put into place, such as admins not being able to send one message to all group members.

Once inside the group, you can choose to sort by most recent posts or most recent activity. If a Facebook group has fewer than 250 people, group members can see how many times the post has been viewed. After a group exceeds 250 members, this feature is disabled.

Another difference between joining a group and liking a Page is the number of notifications that you receive. When in a group, you can set your notification preferences to be alerted every time there's a post in the group or when a friend posts, or you can turn off notifications.

With a Page, however, you'll be notified when someone likes your comment or tags you in a comment, much like with regular comments and likes on Facebook.

Unique Features

A unique feature only offered in Pages is Page Insights. This allows the Page administrators to see what activity the Page has been receiving during a period of time, even in a graphical representation.

This is just one of the many ways Facebook Pages allow you to monitor the audience and how well your product or message is being received. These analytics are not offered, or needed, in Groups because they're meant to communicate with a small, select number of people rather than a wide-scale audience.

Groups have unique features, as well, including the admin's ability to designate members as Group Experts. Experts have a badge next to their name so group members can pay particular attention to informative posts. Admins and Group Experts can collaborate on Q&A sessions, address concerns, respond to questions, and more.