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I'm on Facebook. Now What?

By Cynthia Lambert, adult services department supervisor at SCLSNJ's Mary Jacobs Memorial Library branch



By now, most small business owners know they “need” to be using social media. Yet, many are still unsure what to do with their accounts. Simply sticking up ads or operating hours won't work. But doing more can be a real challenge. Given the constantly changing nature of social media, it can feel like you will never be able to keep up. This leads to frustration, anger, inconsistent posting, and worst of all, dead or dormant accounts. There are a few basics you can follow that will help make this process easier.

But before we get to those, let's talk about social media in general: if you are unsure of how to proceed and find social media a mystery or a problem, stick with Facebook. It's the most popular platform of social media, with approximately 71% of Internet users on the platform according to the Pew Research Center. The next closest platform is LinkedIn, with 28% of Internet users. That being said, it is easy to get started with Facebook, and fairly easy to use overall.

Now, about that “need” to be on social media. I agree that it is important to be on social media and need is the word I would normally use. However, it is not good to be on social media if you aren't going to do it. That's right, I'm saying that if you are only going to post once a month, don't be on social media. There is nothing worse than dead pages. When a business page is largely abandoned, it tells the world: “This is not a business that is organized, efficient, or modern.” It could even lead potential customers to assume you have gone out of business. You should post multiple times a week at a minimum. It is far worse to use social media in a way that reflects poorly on your organization than to not be on social media!

When using Facebook, you are able to deactivate your account at anytime. Deactivating, instead of completely deleting the account, allows you to return at and start again. This is important, because you want to keep your business name for you. Plus, it's true, you should be on social media and this pause will allow you time to find your footing without reflecting poorly on the business.

So, how do you get ready to be on Facebook and do it right? Try these 5 basics:

1. **Make a plan:** You wouldn't just wing it to create a television or local newspaper ad; you shouldn't just wing it with Facebook. Social media of any kind is simply a new marketing channel that you can use. As with any marketing, it is best to make a marketing plan. Ask yourself: Who do I want to reach? What do I want to say? What do I want to accomplish? Who in my industry does this well? For those looking for more help with social media and marketing plans, SCLSNJ is hosting “Be a Business Maker” at our Warren Township Library branch on Friday, March 18. We will have a session on social media and a session on making a marketing plan.

2. **Commit to learning:** Don't worry if you feel behind the curve. Most of us learned to do social media by simply doing it. There is little formal education readily available on the subject. If you are unable to make to our Business Maker Day, try a book such as [Facebook for Dummies](#). If you don't have time to read an entire book, Facebook itself can help. They have an entire section dedicated to [Facebook for Business](#). Need more help? Set up an appointment with one of the business librarians at SCLSNJ. We can help you understand the basics and get you started.



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3. Create quality content: Once you are ready, start posting. Keep in mind, social media is about engagement, not just advertising and marketing. Sure, you can post about the sale you are having or the new product you are producing, but you need to post about other things as well. You need to create original content. Try creating posts about what happens behind the scenes at your business--people love to see how things work. Does your company do volunteer work? Let the world know by posting about it. Share your passions, your news, and relate what you do to what is happening in the world. For example, if you are selling tea, a post about the final season of Downton Abbey makes sense.

4. Add photos: Simple text-based posts are fine, but you need visual content like photos or graphs as well. Not a great photographer? That's OK, you can get 10 high quality images every 10 days delivered directly to your inbox from [Unsplash](#) for free! Not every photo will work for you, but over time, you will build a library of images that you can use without copyright issues. [Death to Stock Photos](#) is a similar service that sends photos monthly.

5. Engage: Facebook -- in fact, all social media -- is all about engagement. Even if you are busy, someone should be monitoring your page multiple times a day. If someone comments on a post, like it, comment back -- engage. One of the best ways to build a community is to like other pages and people. Ask the organizations and individuals you already work with if they are on Facebook and like their pages and posts. You can ask them to like your page via Facebook, place the Facebook icon on your traditional ads and promotional materials, and even face-to-face. That's right -- it's OK to say, "We just started our Facebook page; please consider following us!"

Social media is an important new channel to engage and interact with your community. Facebook offers a great opportunity to get started. SCLSNJ has a wide variety of books and programs that can help. And don't forget about one of our most valuable resources: our dedicated business librarians, who are here to help you to find the right resources for your needs. The 21st century library is here to help you and your business thrive in an ever-changing world. Stop by to find out more about how we can help.

About Somerset County Library System of New Jersey

Somerset County Library System of New Jersey (SCLSNJ) partners with you to connect, to explore, to share and to discover. Together we enrich lives, expand knowledge and strengthen communities. SCLSNJ branches can be found in Bridgewater, Bound Brook, Hillsborough, Manville, North Plainfield, Peapack & Gladstone, Rocky Hill at Mary Jacobs Memorial Library, Somerville, Warren Township and Watchung. Additionally, there are two SCLSNJ reading stations in Branchburg and Washington Valley. Visit [SCLSNJ.org](#) for further information about library services offered at SCLSNJ.

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