



## Using Facebook to Communicate with your Membership Base

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### Article Title

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### Summary

For membership organisations to succeed, it is vital that they are able to effectively communicate with their membership base. Traditional forms of communication such as letters, telephone and email are all still valid methods; however, people are now moving online and are utilising social networking to communicate with family and friends. Membership organisations need to understand that becoming involved with Facebook and using it to communicate with members is an effective way of growing a vibrant, online community.

### Article Body

Social media is described as being any kind of website that includes user generated content. Social media is one of the most popular activities online. More and more people are logging onto social networks, creating and commenting on blogs and creating user reviews for products.

Organisations that are built upon memberships are starting to understand the true value that lies in these tools. There are many different social networking sites available, and one of the leading sites is Facebook. Founded in February 2004, Facebook is a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently. Originally created for students within Harvard University, it has evolved into a communication platform for all, and is now being used by millions of people throughout the globe:

- More than 400 million active users
- 50% of active users log on to Facebook in any given day
- More than 35 million users update their status each day
- More than 5 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums, etc.) shared each week
- More than 3.5 million events created each month
- More than 3 million active Pages on Facebook
- More than 1.5 million local businesses have active Pages on Facebook
- More than 20 million people become fans of Pages each day
- Pages have created more than 5.3 billion fans
- The media age of a Facebook user is 26
  - Yet the fastest growing segment on Facebook is 55-65 year-old females

The fact that so many people are now using Facebook means that it makes sense for membership organisations to utilise it to improve communication and to create an interactive experience for their community.

Many membership organisations are still using Web 1.0 technologies to communicate with their member base - a static website providing announcements and information, but with no way for the





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website user to add information or communicate back to the website owner. For some membership organisations, they will have an excellent designed website which provides a wealth of information to their members. However, people are now becoming accustomed to using social media to gather important information. From a membership organisation's perspective, it seems what makes these technologies appealing, is the various social media tools that enable users to easily publish ideas and broadcast them to a wide audience. Unlike the one way communication associated with Web 1.0, today's technology enables users to create a sort of digital identity by sharing personal thoughts and relevant ideas.

More and more membership organisations are taking advantage of the different tools Facebook offers to improve how they communicate with their members. Managing a membership organisation can be difficult; with all the aspects of running a business, effective communication with members is particularly important. However, finding ways to effectively communicate with your membership base is not always an easy task – frequent contact is vital to ensuring members are retained year in, year out. If membership organisations can find a reliable way to communicate with their members, they will be able to provide important information that will not only improve the members' experience, but help build a productive membership base also.

Facebook's social networking can help build the sort of communication structure that enables membership managers to communicate with members on a regular basis. Because most people are comfortable using Facebook to communicate, utilising the following applications can help to improve member-related communication:

- **Group Feature:** Creating targeted communication groups for different member types, allows member managers to easily share information in a way that is specifically tailored for that member
- **Event Feature:** Because most membership organisations need to communicate information related to numerous events, Facebook's event feature can facilitate excellent communication. Scheduling an event is very simple and its broadcast feature allows membership managers to not only reach a large audience, but easily reminds members of important events
- **Send Message Feature:** This feature enables membership managers to send messages directly to members. Managers can create a variety of groups based on communication needs. What makes this application so useful, is that much like email, managers can pinpoint communication to specific members
- **Multimedia Feature:** Membership managers can share multimedia with their members. The ability to easily share videos and images with members can add a vast amount of value to members. Images of past events, video interviews with key members and other multimedia communications can be shared instantly with other members. If designed properly, these snapshots can provide powerful insight into the membership organisation and their membership community. By emphasising certain aspects of the membership community, membership managers can have a powerful hand in shaping it
- **Announcement Feature:** Membership managers can easily broadcast announcements and reminders to help members stay on top of important member-related events
- **Blogging Feature:** By using the 'Notes' feature, membership managers can provide regular updates, blog about important events and issues and provide valuable information to members





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- **Discussion Feature:** By using the discussion feature, membership managers can create an effective way for members to share ideas and thoughts with the organisation and with other members. As long as the discussions items are properly designed and well managed, they can present an excellent way for members to participate in the organisations decision making process
- **Member-to-Member:** One of the most popular ways membership managers can use Facebook is to help other members communicate and build relationships with each other

Facebook is a powerful tool for membership organisations because its social networking structure can be used to facilitate communication and build a dynamic online community. Depending on the membership organisation, the majority of members may already have a Facebook account and update them on a regular basis. For membership managers, this provides them with a powerful communication tool – one which can be used to share all kinds of different information and which can be tailored to meet the personal needs of individual members.

Managing a membership Facebook account is made extremely simple through using an integrated membership management software solution. These solutions enable membership managers to update and manage their Facebook account without having to leave the membership management solution platform. The platform will also integrate into other social media sites such as Twitter and LinkedIn. Good quality membership management solutions also integrate with CRM systems and other back end office solutions, providing membership organisations with a way of managing their membership base with ease.

## Resource Box

[Persona Membership Management Solution](#) is part of the portfolio of solutions from [Silverbear Ltd](#). Employed within societies and membership organisations throughout the UK, Persona helps organisations to build, define, examine, inform and communicate with existing and potential members.

Persona is helping membership organisations on a daily basis. For more information on Persona and the benefits of membership management software, visit their website:

<http://www.SilverbearMembership.co.uk>

