



5 WAYS TO GROW YOUR LOCAL FOODS BUSINESS WITH FACEBOOK

Most business leaders struggle to use Facebook to grow their businesses. Part of the struggle is that business leaders do not have the time to keep up with all the changes that take place within Facebook. Deciding how to organize an effective Facebook advertising strategy can be challenging, as well.

Developing advertisements can be an overwhelming process. Ads range in purpose from gathering e-mails for new leads to driving traffic to websites for e-commerce sales. Finally, business leaders face several decisions to make ads effective. Some include:

- What is the most effective wording to communicate with fans?
- How can ads target specific customers?
- Should video or images be used in the ad?
- How many dollars should be invested in the ad?
- How long should the ad run?
- What is an acceptable return on investment (ROI) for a Facebook ad?

These are just a few of the many decisions that business leaders must make to maximize Facebook's ability to grow their business. Many other questions exist, especially related to organic, do-it-yourself (DIY) posting of content, including:

- What type of content should be posted?
- What time(s) should content be posted?
- What strategies could be used to increase fan engagement?
- How should business leaders use Facebook live?
- How should business leaders use Facebook stories?

This publication is designed to be an easy, step-by-step process for business leaders to learn to use Facebook to grow their business. In each section, we provide tips and resources to help you market your business using Facebook. To grow, your business needs fans to "like" your page, engage with your posts, and eventually move from being fans to paying customers.



1

START BY USING HIGH-QUALITY IMAGES AND VIDEOS¹

The best way to grab your audience's attention is with creative graphics such as pictures and videos. Here are some of the top creative apps for creating and editing documents, photos, and videos.



Canva is a designing tool that allows users to create and design presentations, social media graphics, and other documents with thousands of layouts and a helpful drag-and-drop tool. **Canva** is also available as an iPad app.



Microsoft Publisher is one of the many applications offered within Microsoft Office 365. Publisher allows users to easily design unique documents with categorized themes and layouts for professional material without the hassle. Publisher is great for creating flyers, invitations, brochures, labels, and cards that can easily be exported as Adobe PDFs.



The Adobe Creative Cloud offers apps and services for video, design, photography, and the web. Each tool offers built-in tutorials and templates. Adobe Creative Cloud includes the following apps: Photoshop, InDesign, Photoshop Sketch, Illustrator, Adobe Spark, and Capture.



Adobe Photoshop Express is a free image-editing and collage-making mobile app from Adobe Systems. The app is compatible with iOS, Android, and Windows phones and tablets.



PicLab allows users to download the app and edit pictures and graphics by adding text, borders, and overlays.



Adobe Spark is among the top 10 creative apps. It allows users to create graphics with Spark Post, web pages with Spark Page, and video stories with Spark Video. These applications can be synced between your computer and mobile device to create and share anytime and anywhere.



Plotaverse allows users to turn a still photo into a video or GIF. It's free to sign up, and users have access to the latest news and tutorials in the **Plotaverse** suite of apps so they can learn how to manage new features and design creative GIFs and videos.



Ripl allows users to layer animated templates on top of photos. Ripl has a free, basic subscription and pro subscriptions available. Each subscription comes with designer templates, personalized advice, one-click sharing, and real-time analytics.



Quik is a creative video-editing app created by GoPro that allows users to apply templates, text overlays, and music to videos that were pre-filmed or filmed within the app. The iOS app is compatible with iPhones and iPads, and it also has photo-editing features.



Facebook Stories allow Facebook users to upload photos and videos to their "story," which stays visible for 24 hours. Stories can be made with fun filters and Snapchat-like lenses. Users can track who views their story while the post is still active. Learn more about **Facebook Stories here**.



Videoshop allows users to combine photos and videos, experiment with stop-motion, and edit videos. It is compatible with iPhone, iPad, and Android. Users can integrate music, sound effects, subtitles, slow motion, and more.



Shutterstock.com is a website with more than 200 million images and videos that can be downloaded and used for free without liability. The Shutterstock app is compatible with iOS and Android, so you can get high-quality images anywhere at any time.



Boomerang is a mobile app from Instagram that allows users to create high-quality mini videos that fast forward and play backward with just the click of a button. It's now a featured tool on Instagram's editing features. Learn how to create a **Boomerang video here**.



TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE

Facebook marketing principles are similar to any other marketing channel. You must identify your customer and use social media to build awareness of your brand and persuade targeted customers to buy your product or service. You must convince these customers that the product or experience they receive will solve their problem.

Following are some tips, a case study to show how to use Facebook's ad tools to target farmers' market customers, and additional resources to learn how to target customers on Facebook.

Tips

To determine your target audience on Facebook:

1. Determine what problem your product or service solves.
2. Determine an audience that would need or desire your product.
3. Determine where these potential customers are physically and virtually.

To determine what is unique about your product or service, simply answer these questions:

- How is your product or service unique from competitor products?
- What struggles do your customers have?
- How can your product or service solve their struggles better than your competitors'?
- How can your business deliver your product or service better than your competitors'?

To determine what audience would need or desire your product, think about the values, behaviors, and demographic characteristics of your potential customers. Try to answer the following questions:

- What is the age and gender of your potential customer?
- What is their average income level?
- What behaviors do they engage in online?
 - o What are their hobbies?
 - o What are their interests?
- What type of Facebook pages do you think they would follow?
- What is their occupation?

To determine where these customers are both physically and virtually, you will need to do some research, or find a market analyst who can help you. Some steps that you can take yourself are below.

Case Study

Most people are unaware of Facebook's ad tools that can be used to help you identify your audience. MSU researchers conducted a case study to determine the number of potential customers with a specific radius of a farmers' market in Mississippi. The Facebook ad tool can be used to do the same thing for your food business or any other type of business. This case study was part of a Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce project in 2017. The project identified a local foods system profile for each county in Mississippi (Barnes and Wells, 2017). In addition, we also examined potential customers who could visit farmers' markets throughout Mississippi. We used the Facebook ad creation tool to estimate the number of potential farmers' market customers in a 10-mile radius around a farmers' market in Oktibbeha County, Mississippi.

Using Facebook's Ad Tool

Go to Facebook's ad creation tool and select Engagement as your marketing objective and then Page Likes as an ad that you want to create (Figure 1). The next step is to select the Facebook page that you want to use for this ad. If you are an administrator on only one page, the choice is made for you. If not, you will have to select the page. Name the ad and select your Facebook page (Figure 2).

What's your marketing objective? [Help: Choosing an Objective](#)

Awareness	Consideration	Conversion
Brand awareness	Traffic	Conversions
Reach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engagement	Catalog sales
	App installs	Store visits
	Video views	
	Lead generation	
	Messages	



Engagement

Get more people to see and engage with your post or Page. Engagement can include comments, shares, likes, event responses and offer claims.

Include a Form in Your Ad ...

Instead of sending people to a form on your website, you can use the lead generation objective to include a form that opens instantly from your ad. The mobile-friendly forms are fast to fill out and prefill with info from people's Facebook profiles.

[See How it Looks](#)

Post engagement
Page likes
Event responses

Campaign Name ⓘ

FIGURE 1. FACEBOOK AD CREATION TOOL OBJECTIVES.

Create New Ad Set ⓘ
Create Multiple New Ad Sets ⓘ

Ad Set Name ⓘ

Page
Choose the Facebook Page you want to promote.

Facebook Page ⓘ Bricks-To-Clicks ▼ +

FIGURE 2. FACEBOOK AD CREATION TOOL PAGE AND AD NAME.

Next, we identified a customer audience around the Starkville, Mississippi, area. Select 10-mile radius, men and women, and ages 25 to 55. Facebook estimates that, in this particular 10-mile radius around Starkville, a total of 19,000 people can be reached with ads. Notice that this estimate accounts for gender and age factors (Figure 3).

Audience
Define who you want to see your ads. [Learn more.](#)

Create New Use a Saved Audience ▼

Custom Audiences ⓘ Add Custom Audiences or Lookalike Audiences

Exclude | Create New ▼

Locations ⓘ People who live in this location ▼

United States

📍 Starkville, Mississippi + 10mi ▼

📍 Include ▼ | Type to add more locations | Browse

Map showing Starkville, Mississippi, with a 10-mile radius circle. Includes a "Drop Pin" button.

Add Locations in Bulk

Age ⓘ 25 ▼ - 55 ▼

Gender ⓘ All Men Women

Create a Lookalike Audience

Audience Size

Your audience is defined.

Potential Reach: 19,000 people ⓘ

Estimated Daily Results

Reach
580 - 3,000 ⓘ

Page Likes
7 - 40 ⓘ

The accuracy of estimates is based on factors like past campaign data, the budget you entered and market data. Numbers are provided to give you an idea of performance for your budget, but are only estimates and don't guarantee results.

Were these estimates helpful?

FIGURE 3. FACEBOOK AD CREATION TOOL WITH CITY, RADIUS, AGE, AND GENDER VARIABLES.

The next step is one of the most powerful for estimating the number of potential customers in a geographic area. Assume that we also know additional factors of interest about potential customers for a farmers' market. If we know these additional factors, we can then update the estimate of potential customers within the 10-mile area. If we select college graduate and farmers' market as additional factors, Facebook then updates the estimate of potential customers to be 8,300 (Figure 4).

To maximize the usefulness of Facebook's ad creation tool, think about the factors that describe your customer. The more you can identify these factors, the more precise you can estimate the number of potential customers within a geographic radius.

To learn more about this case study, visit the Bricks-To-Clicks [project website](#).

FIGURE 4. FACEBOOK AD CREATION TOOL WITH 10-MILE RADIUS, AGE, GENDER, COLLEGE GRADUATE, AND FARMERS' MARKET INTEREST FACTORS.

Resources

- ✓ **Developing a Marketing Plan: A Workbook for Agritourism Operators, Farmers' Market Vendors, and Local Food Producers.** Use this resource to take the steps of identifying what is unique about your product and who would potentially purchase your good or service.
- ✓ An additional workbook, **Agritourism Marketing and Branding in Mississippi**, can provide you with information on how to identify customer demographics, physical locations, attitudes, lifestyles, and behaviors. All of this information will help you create a picture of your target customers and how your product will appeal to them.

3

ENGAGE WITH YOUR FANS—DAILY

Most engagement with fans depends on the content you post. Believe it or not, it is this simple: If you use poor content, then engagement will be low. However, if you use good content, then your fans will engage with you on Facebook or other platforms.

How do you deliver good content?

Try featuring high-quality images and video that capture your fans' attention and then encourage them to engage. Increase engagement with content that fans value. Here are some tips that can help you create this type of content.

Tips

1. **Create a clear message that fans want.** Think about the customer's problem that your business can solve. Craft your message to explain how your product or service can solve the customer's problem and make their life better.
2. **Repeatedly tell your message with video and images.** Post a diverse set of images and videos to showcase how your business solves customers' problems. One idea is to describe the problem and its impact on your customer, and then tell how you can solve it with your product or service. Post a customer testimonial occasionally.
3. **Find a reason to show up every day on your Facebook.** This is perhaps the most challenging thing to do. You need to grab the attention of new fans, as well as encourage current fans to become more engaged with you.
We have found the following accounts to be excellent examples of mixing personal branding with a true purpose for showing up every day on social media.

- **Jasmine Star**
- **Amy Porterfield**
- **Dwayne Johnson**

4. For more on **engaging your social media audience**, see the References section at the end of this publication. Here are some specific tips from MSU Extension Publication 3245 *Engaging Your Social Media Audience*:
 - Reply to fans and engage with them. If you post content, do not forget to respond to fans. This builds trust and credibility.
 - Be visual. Every time you post, use an image. You will reach more people than if you simply respond with text copy only.
 - Ask a question. You have to call people to action. It is no different on Facebook. Use a post to ask open-ended questions.
 - Do a giveaway. One of the most popular things that businesses do on Facebook is a product or service giveaway. Be sure to ask only for comments and reactions on the post used to launch your giveaway. **Be aware: Never ask fans to like your page or share your post to enter your giveaway, as both are against Facebook rules of giveaways.**
 - Keep it short. People have short attention spans, so get to the point. People do not read content; they scan it.

Resources

- ✓ Learn about **Facebook marketing resources**.
- ✓ Learn how to **create your own Facebook business page**.
- ✓ Learn how to use your **Facebook business page to promote your business**.
- ✓ Learn how to study your **Facebook page data to maximize engagement**.
- ✓ Enroll in **Facebook online courses to build your marketing knowledge**.
- ✓ Learn how to use **Facebook live**.

4

EVALUATE ENGAGEMENT AND EVOLVE

Facebook provides valuable data about your followers for free. To access your data, go to your business page and choose Insights at the top of the page (Figure 5).

The Insights overview section gives a quick review of your page's basic statistics and how they compare to the previous week's statistics. You can also view the same by daily or monthly counts. Click on any of the summaries to get a more detailed view.

On the left side of the page, you will see the various sections. Try to look through these once a week to have a good idea of your engagement performance. Think through each of these sections frequently.

Tips

Figure 5 shows some of the topics that you can explore within Facebook Insights.

- ✓ **Followers** – A day-by-day breakdown of your followers can be found here. Take a look at total and net followers. Did you have a large amount of follows or unfollows on one day? If so, why? Look back at posts on that particular day.
- ✓ **Posts** – This is arguably the most important section of your insights because it shows you which of your posts are working and which are not. This gives you an idea of what you need to do more of in the future to drive engagement on your page. Take a look at each post. Examine each post and its reach and engagement. Did one post contain a more captivating visual? Did the highest engaging post take place at 3 a.m. or at 3 p.m.? Click Post Types at the top for a summary.
- ✓ **People** – What do you know about your followers? Here, you can see their gender, age group, country, city, and language spoken. If you have a majority female audience, does that make sense for your product or service? If not, maybe you need to determine how to get more men to engage.
- ✓ **Local** – This shows the breakdown of Facebook users in your area (by zip code), regardless of whether they follow you or not. How do your followers compare? How can you reach a segment that you are not currently reaching in the local area?
- ✓ **Messages** – Take a look at your page responsiveness. What percentage of messages did you respond to? If not 100%, then why not? How long did it take to respond? Most people will expect a prompt response if they message you during generally accepted work hours. How do you think a potential customer feels if they message you and have no response 24 hours later? This is a critical part of engagement. Always reply as soon as possible to fans. You build credibility and trust when you do.

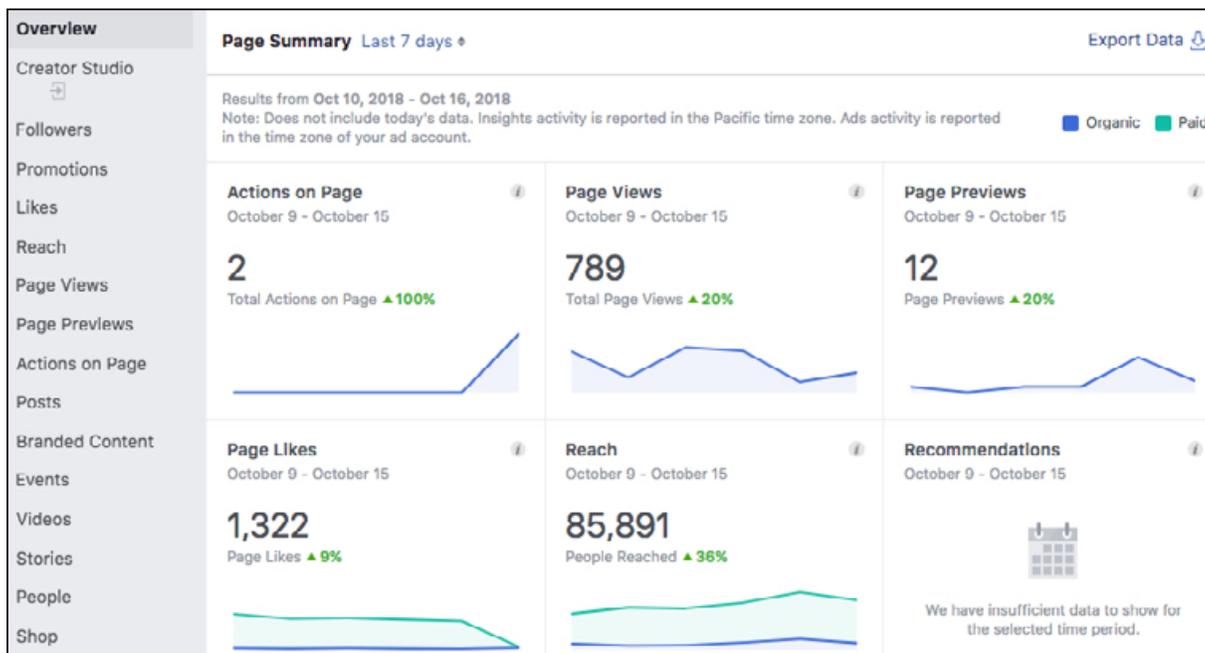


FIGURE 5. INSIGHTS DASHBOARD FOR A FACEBOOK PAGE.

It is vital that you understand what is driving engagement on your Facebook page, especially as you begin to use Facebook advertisements. Without organic engagement, the Facebook algorithm will not value your posts highly. In addition, if you are incorrectly targeting audiences, then you are wasting money. A detailed breakdown of every Insights section can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/business/a/page/page-insights>.

5

USE PAID ADS WISELY

While it is beyond the scope of this article to explore every Facebook ad that can be used to grow your business, we do focus on two of the most commonly used ads. Using a case study from the **Bricks-To-Clicks** program, we illustrate how a business can grow its revenue using Facebook ads.

The case study is **HogEye Cameras**, which operates in Crawford, Mississippi. They focus on helping landowners combat feral hog infestations. Feral hogs cause significant damage to crops, pastures, and many other assets. HogEye Cameras provide real-time video monitoring of hog traps using a smartphone application. Figures 6 and 7 show the product and how it is positioned in the field to catch feral hogs, respectively.



FIGURE 6. HOG EYE TRAP CAMERA AND MOBILE APP USED TO CATCH FERAL HOGS.



FIGURE 7. HOG EYE TRAP CAMERAS POSITIONED NEAR FERAL HOG TRAP.

Facebook Ad #1: The Problem-Solution Ad

One of the most common Facebook ads can be used to increase your number of fans or followers (Figure 8). We often refer to this as a brand-awareness campaign. The objective is to make people aware of a brand and then encourage them to follow or like that brand's Facebook business page.

In this example, we use a post that features a problem-solution ad. The problem faced by landowners is feral hog infestation. The solution is to buy a HogEye camera and use it with your trap to catch more feral hogs. The post shows a video of feral hogs being caught by a trap that was triggered by HogEye's mobile app. Simply touch a button, the trap gate drops, and you catch feral hogs.

We used ad copy that highlights the universal feature of the product—it can be used on any trap, anywhere, and at any time. Also, we highlighted that using this product helps solve the feral hog problem. We showed how the system works and how it can solve viewers' feral hog problem.

The main call to action is to "like" or "follow" the HogEye Trap Cameras Facebook page. This particular post was also converted into a paid advertisement to reach additional fans. With more than 600 post engagements (e.g., reactions, comments, shares), the cost of increasing brand awareness was very low.



FIGURE 8. HOG EYE TRAP CAMERAS FACEBOOK AD.

Facebook Ad #2: The Problem-Take Action Organic Post

Another commonly used Facebook ad is a post made on a Facebook page that can be converted into an ad by targeting specific fans and investing dollars to reach those fans (Figure 9).

In this example post, we explained the problem, which is that feral hog damage reduces land value. We also highlighted that we understand (empathy) this problem and that we have a solution to mitigate the damages associated with feral hog infestation: schedule a call with a HogEye Trap Cameras salesperson to learn how this product can solve their problem. The main call to action is to click on the website link to schedule a call.

The post generated more than 1,000 engagements, which made it a good candidate to convert into a Facebook ad. To do so, you would click on "Boost Post," then select the fans that you want to show the ad, and then decide how many dollars to invest.

HogEye Trap Cameras

One threat that can reduce the value of your land dramatically is **#FeralHogs**. We understand the damage Feral Hogs can do to your property, and we know how to stop it.

Schedule your call today --> <https://bit.ly/2MT7SzZ>

#HogEyeCameras #Mississippi

1,275 People Reached 67 Engagements 29 Clicks **Boost Post**

Valente Vargas, Jason Dodson and 59 others 4 Shares

Like Comment Share

FIGURE 9. HOG EYE TRAP CAMERAS FACEBOOK POST.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this publication, we have focused on how to use Facebook to grow your business. The five ways that you can grow your business include:

- ✓ Start by using high-quality images and video.
- ✓ Target your audience.
- ✓ Engage with your fans—daily.
- ✓ Evaluate engagement and evolve.
- ✓ Use paid ads wisely.

To be sure, these five steps are only the beginning of marketing your business on Facebook. However, they can be a roadmap to getting started.

See the References section for more information on creating effective Facebook ads and to learn more about how Facebook can help your business. To learn more about social media marketing, branding, local food system economics, and related educational programs at Mississippi State University Extension, contact the following programs:

Bricks-To-Clicks™
Power Your Business with a Marketing Plan That Works

<https://brickstoclicks.extension.msstate.edu/>

VIP | Virtual
Incubator
Program

[https://techoutreach.extension.msstate.edu/
training/programs/digital-ready-business](https://techoutreach.extension.msstate.edu/training/programs/digital-ready-business)



Rachael Carter and Lauren-Coily Lincley

[https://extension.msstate.edu/farming/
agri-tourism/growing-your-brand](https://extension.msstate.edu/farming/agri-tourism/growing-your-brand)

LFSE 
Local Food System Economies

[https://extension.msstate.edu/agriculture/
local-flavor/local-food-system-economies](https://extension.msstate.edu/agriculture/local-flavor/local-food-system-economies)

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