

TIP SHEET

Early ways for small, indie and nonprofit news orgs to approach changes to Facebook's algorithm.

OFF-PLATFORM STRATEGIES

KEEP BUILDING YOUR OWN COMMUNITY DIRECTLY

Make sure the experience with your content is welcoming. How are you asking people to be part of your community, especially when they bounce to an article page?

- ✓ IS IT EASY AND ATTRACTIVE TO SIGN UP FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER?
- ✓ DO YOU INVITE READERS TO CONTRIBUTE NEWS TIPS?
- ✓ HOW DO YOU ASK THEM TO BE MEMBERS, OR VOLUNTEERS OR DONORS?

DIVERSIFY AND REMIND YOUR READERS HOW THEY CAN FIND YOU

Ensure your content is getting out to all the places and platforms where readers may be. And be sure to remind your readers of those places.

- ✓ IS YOUR SITE OPTIMIZED FOR GOOGLE AMP, APPLE NEWS, OR INSTANT ARTICLES?
- ✓ ARE YOU EXPERIMENTING STRATEGICALLY WITH OTHER SOCIAL PLATFORMS?
- ✓ REMIND YOUR READERS OF ALL THE PLACES WHERE THEY CAN GET YOUR NEWS:
 - Follow you on Twitter and turn on mobile notifications
 - Subscribe to your newsletter
 - Ask them to turn on mobile or browser notifications
 - Ask them to set your website as their homepage
 - Ask them to add your site to their bookmarks bar
 - Remind them of your app and push alerts
 - Share your RSS feed
 - Tell them they can set a preference to see your page's posts first in their Facebook News Feed

ON-PLATFORM STRATEGIES

CONSIDER INVESTING YOUR TIME IN TARGETED ADVERTISEMENTS

Consider taking the investment you were putting behind posting articles on Facebook and paying to boost posts and instead using it strategically to pay for targeted ads on the platform.

- ✓ BUILD ADS FOR SPECIFIC CONTENT, EMAIL SIGN-UPS, FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS, AND MORE
- ✓ SPEND TIME UNDERSTANDING HOW TO BUILD EFFECTIVE ADS
- ✓ LEARN HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT AUDIENCES TO TARGET, AND HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

YES, KEEP POSTING ON YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE – BUT DO SO STRATEGICALLY.

Long gone are the days of posting content on Facebook with individual posts that merely repeat the headline.

- ✓ POST ONLY YOUR BEST STUFF, AND MAKE THOSE POSTS INTERACTIVE
- ✓ ANALYZE YOUR PAST POSTS AND LOOK FOR ENGAGEMENT TRENDS
- ✓ SHARE ARTICLES THAT WILL ENCOURAGE MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION
- ✓ THINK ABOUT STORIES THAT CITIZENS CAN TAKE ACTION AROUND
- ✓ LEAVE SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS AND REPLIES (THEY'RE IMPORTANT TO THE NEW ALGORITHM)
- ✓ CONSIDER SOME CREATIVE WAYS TO REWARD YOUR MOST VALUABLE COMMENTERS

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OFF-PLATFORM STRATEGIES

EMAIL. YOUR AUDIENCE FUNNEL PROBABLY DEPENDS ON IT.

Growing your email list is critical. So is sending engaging and effective newsletters.



DO YOUR EMAILS BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR AUDIENCE, OR SIMPLY REPEAT YOUR HEADLINES?



DO YOU INVITE PEOPLE TO EASILY SIGN UP? ON THE HOMEPAGE, AT THE END OF ARTICLES, AFTER A COMMENT, WHEN THEY DONATE?



DO YOU HAVE A WELL-DEFINED PATH FOR EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS?

- How quickly do you reach out after the initial sign-up?
- How often to do you communicate?
- How do you interact with the active subscribers versus non-active subscribers?

EMPHASIZE AND ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO SHARE YOUR CONTENT

It's important for your readers to share your content, and for you to encourage it.



ARE YOUR SHARE BUTTONS WELL-PLACED, EASY TO FIND, AND LARGE ENOUGH?



IS YOUR CONTENT EASY TO SHARE WITH WELL-WORDED HEADLINES, CLEAR IMAGES AND SOCIAL CARDS OR (AT TIMES) MEMES?



HOW MIGHT YOU ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO SHARE YOUR CONTENT IN THEIR CHANNELS?



WHICH KEY INFLUENCERS MIGHT HELP SHARE AND SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT YOUR WORK?

- Heads of local civic associations
- Neighborhood groups or homeowners associations
- Public officials or industry leaders
- Your most active commenters

ON-PLATFORM STRATEGIES

FACEBOOK GROUPS COULD BE FERTILE GROUND FOR ENGAGEMENT. OR A TIME SUCK.

Many publishers have created Facebook Groups around a specific topic, location or interest. Others are quickly creating groups to maintain referral traffic. One is a good idea and the other is not.



GROUPS TAKE A LOT OF WORK TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN A QUALITY COMMUNITY OF MEMBERS



CONSIDER THE LEVEL OF COMMITMENT INVOLVED WHEN DECIDING WHETHER TO START A GROUP



GROUPS CAN WORK WELL FOR PUBLISHERS AND PAGE MANAGERS WHO:

- Want to break their audience up into specific, interest-based groups
- See value in hosting and nurturing an ongoing conversation among that group

ONE BIG CAVEAT TO ALL OF THIS: KEEP YOUR NEWS JUDGMENT.

Just because Facebook is emphasizing content that will be engaged with doesn't mean you should focus on producing only news that you think will attract likes, shares and comments.



TAKE THIS ADVICE FROM SUE CROSS, CEO AT THE INSTITUTE FOR NON-PROFIT NEWS:

"There always will be important stories to surface that are not particularly engaging. They are complex or disturbing. Or they simply give voice to people others don't want to hear. Don't abandon those people or those stories. Don't give up your news judgment. Readers count on it. It is what can restore trust in news."