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15 ways to optimize Facebook for business

Target your audience with lists, ads

BY ANDREA V. BRAMBILA

NEW YORK -- Real estate agents can take concrete steps to get the most out of Facebook and grow their business, according to speakers at Agent Reboot in New York City.

Navigating social media can be "like trying to take a drink from a fire hose. It's truly overwhelming," said Charlie Engel, vice president of sales at online classified ad company [Oodle Inc.](#) Engel spoke Tuesday with Agent Reboot host Nicole Nicolay of [Agent Evolution](#), which provides social media training and WordPress website design. Engel and Nicolay offered 15 Facebook strategy tips:

- 1. Create a detailed profile.** This includes adding photos, basic personal information, friend lists under "Featured People," education and work credentials, philosophy, arts and entertainment preferences, favorite sports, activities and interests, and contact information. Under a recent Facebook profile redesign, users can add "Info" links that will appear under their username.
- 2. Import contacts.** To keep in touch with their sphere of influence, agents should import their contacts' information from e-mail programs like Yahoo, AOL, Gmail and Microsoft Outlook.
- 3. Create lists.** Lists can help agents target clients on Facebook. For example, an agent can have separate lists by geographic location, by topic, or by type -- i.e., investors, move-up buyers and first-time homebuyers. Under the redesign, some friend lists can be made public. People on a particular list will get a

[notification](#) if that list is added to the "Featured People" section of a user's profile, so users should be careful with what they title the lists and who they add to them, according to Facebook tracking site [Inside Facebook](#).

4. Filter and target (aka listen and comment). Once friends are broken down into groups, users can click on their "Most Recent" news feed and select lists from a drop-down menu in order to interact with each group individually.

5. Share the 3 P's (personality, passion, profession). "Show people you're a human being, that there's a personality behind the post," Engel said. A Facebook personal profile should create a sense of the whole person. Agent can talk about business and their listings, "but do it in a way that's not a blatant advertisement," Engel said. It is against Facebook's terms of service to include listings in a personal profile.

6. Share photos and video. Video "definitely stands out in the news feed," Nicolay said.

7. Create a detailed Facebook page. This is where agents can share listings on Facebook, though they shouldn't be the only content on a page. As with the personal profile, a page should include photos and basic information, but also a biography and/or mission statement and useful content based on your target audience or community. It is not necessary to have two accounts to have both a profile and a page -- one account can handle both. Pages are viewable online and are search engine optimized so that even individual posts can appear on Google.

8. Promote your page. Once more than 25 people "Like" a Facebook page, the owner of that page has the ability to create a distinctive "vanity URL" (such as facebook.com/username). A vanity URL (uniform resource locator) is less cumbersome than the URL assigned by Facebook, making it easier to add to marketing materials. In order to attract what Nicolay called "Likers," agents should not only ask people to "Like" their page, but also give them a reason to by telling them what information they will get in return.

9. Create a landing tab. A customized, branded landing tab can include newsletter information or the ability to search properties. The tab developer will need to know Facebook Markup Language, or FBML.

10. **Listing exposure (via Marketplace).** Facebook's classified advertising service, powered by Oodle, allows consumers to find an agent's listings even if there's no direct connection between the agent and the consumer.

11. **Learn the art of social listing posts.** This means that when posting a listing, agents include some interesting information about the listing or the community around the listing. "Give people a reason to engage with you, a call to action," Engel said. And agents should refrain from posting listings in all capital letters -- online, that's like shouting, Nicolay said.

12. **Create a daily engagement plan.** "If you don't manage your social media, your social media will manage you," Engel said. The speakers encouraged agents to schedule 20 to 30 minutes for social media in their day. During that time, agents can update their current status, share a helpful resource, send birthday wishes and make comments, among other activities.

13. **Create a [Facebook Group](#).** These groups allow Facebook users to gather over a shared interest with people they know. Groups can be public or private.

14. **Create relevant [Facebook ads](#).** Facebook asks about 45 pieces of information when you create a profile, Engel said. Though not everyone fills in every piece, that information can help agents target very specific kinds of people. For example: professionals who are over 40, live within 20 miles of a certain ZIP code, have more than two kids, and make more than \$120,000 a year.

15. **Host an event.** Organize a meetup around a local interest; a niche event, such as a modern home tour; a local event, such as a harvest festival; or an educational event, such as a short-sale seminar.