



MARKETING TOOLBOX

Clinton Power

I don't know about you, but I've recently become very disillusioned with Facebook and its ability to support businesses.

In case you haven't noticed, recent changes to their algorithm have meant that less than 15% of people that actually follow your business page see your posts.

The way the algorithm works is the greater the engagement you get through your followers liking, sharing or commenting on your posts, the greater the reach of people that Facebook shows your post to.

Facebook has never been able to show 100% of your posts to people that 'like' your page (formerly called 'fans'.) If they did so, you would never see any of your friends' posts because your News Feed would be overwhelmed with updates. However, they have made recent changes that have significantly reduced the reach of your posts.

For example, I spent some time looking at the stats for some of my old Facebook business posts. I would regularly reach over 300 people with a post- meaning 300+ people actually saw my post in their feed. More recently, however, it seems that the average reach of my post is about 120, based on my last 12 posts. The

consensus amongst online marketers is that there has been a radical drop in engagement on Facebook business pages.

WHY IS FACEBOOK MAKING IT HARDER FOR BUSINESSES?

The reason is simple. Since the Facebook IPO, they need to monetize the site for the shareholders. So this push is part of their movement to encourage business owners to pay for what's called a 'promoted post'.

When you pay \$5-\$10 for a promoted post, Facebook will show more people that are already following you, as well as their friends who don't follow you your post. (You can choose to show your post to only your followers or both your followers and their friends.)

It sounds kind of crazy right? You have to pay Facebook to show your posts to people that are already following your page? Crazy, but true.

MY 'PROMOTED POSTS' EXPERIMENT

I wanted to investigate the promoted posts feature a little further, so I promoted some of my posts to see what kind of results I got.

IS IT TIME FOR THERAPISTS AND COACHES TO ABANDON FACEBOOK?

To put it simply, the response was incredible.

I promoted this humorous post a few days before Christmas. The result after 3 days of promotion was 35 comments, 64 shares and 388 likes. Plus I got 19 new page likes for my [Relationship Matters](#) Facebook page.

I also initiated a few other experiments with similar results, but this one was the most successful. I believe part of the success of this particular post included:

1. It was humorous and entertaining.
2. It was well timed just before a significant holiday.
3. It was very shareable- meaning it was content that people love to share on Facebook.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR COACHES AND THERAPISTS ON FACEBOOK?

I don't see things changing in the near future for us on Facebook.

The way I see it, you will need to consider having a Facebook advertising budget in the future if you want to stay on Facebook and actually have people see your posts on a regular basis.

I'm not sure how you feel about this, but I know many therapists and coaches I speak to are unhappy that this is the case.

On the one side, I can see that Facebook has been free for users and businesses for a long time, so we don't have much right to complain. On the other side, Facebook does need to continue to attract businesses and promote engagement between consumers and businesses for its revenue-producing models to work. It's a fine balance that they don't seem to be getting right at the moment.

SO HOW SHOULD THERAPISTS AND COACHES USE FACEBOOK?

I still think coaches and therapists are positioned to do very well on the Facebook platform. When you think about why people go on Facebook (and there are now upwards of 1 billion members), it's often to connect with family and friends, to be entertained and to share interesting information and content.

Therapists and coaches have a lot of interesting and helpful content that is relevant to large audiences on Facebook. Our content is also ripe to be shared amongst very large segments of the community.



When I post on Facebook, I try to make sure that my post covers at least one of these three elements:

1. **Entertaining**—something that is funny, inspirational or engaging in a way that appeals to a lot of people.
2. **Empowering**—this can be achieved through asking a question and giving your audience a voice.
3. **Educational**—something that teaches or shares information about a topic relevant to your ideal client population.

If you're covering one or more of these bases when posting on Facebook, you're much more likely to increase your engagement and facilitate more people seeing your posts.

SHOULD WE STAY OR ABANDON FACEBOOK?

I'm not convinced that it's time for therapists and coaches to abandon Facebook as a marketing strategy just yet. However, I have been spending more time on Google+ recently and have been impressed with how they manage privacy and the ease at which you can share with different populations and segmented groups (called 'circles').

I also think that it's imperative you consider being active in some way on Google+ because early indicators are that Google is taking your Google+ activity and influence into account when it ranks your website in its search engine.

Whatever the case, what we do know is that nothing is permanent on the Internet and social media is always in a state of flux.

As long as you use social media to drive traffic to your own website and not base all your efforts on one platform, you can be assured of better long-term marketing results.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

[Clinton Power](#) is a Gestalt therapist and passionate marketing coach and consultant who provides online marketing and business development ideas for healthcare professionals. [Visit his website](#) or follow him on Twitter @ [sydneytherapist](#), [Google+](#) or [Facebook](#).