

Best Practices: Limiting Facebook Fan Pages

A Facebook Fan Page (sometimes called a “public profile”) offers you a great way to promote and interact with an engaged and growing community. As of summer 2009, Facebook has more than 200 million active users with more than 100 million users logging in at least once a day! More than 2/3 of Facebook users are outside of college and the fastest growing demographic is those 35 years old and older.

Many local PBS stations have multiple projects and several departments that want to promote different initiatives, so it may be tempting to create a Fan Page for each one. Our advice: don’t be seduced by the idea of having multiple Fan pages. It may take some effort to bring everyone together on one single Fan Page but there are several important reasons why having only one umbrella Fan Page for your station is the best practice and in the long run it is worth the initial effort.

Why should my station only have one Facebook Fan Page?

Search Engine Optimization (SEO): For tactical reasons it is almost always better to have one umbrella page because Fan Pages are SEO friendly. In other words, if you add content to your Fan Page, it can be indexed by Google and the other major search engines. This will help drive traffic to your Fan Page, as well as to your station’s Web site. If you have multiple Fan Pages, the search results are splintered and your site and pages may be less likely to show up towards the top of a search.

Better User Experience: Simply put, having too many pages to choose from is a bad user experience. Splintering your Facebook pages silos the info you are working so hard to promote and segments your station’s audience into sub-groups that may not discover the other kinds of content you have available. Fan Pages allow you to send messages to “Fans” of your organization. When someone becomes a Fan of your page, a link to your Fan Page is inserted into their personal news feed, further spreading your brand across the social network, and letting all of your Fan’s Facebook friends know they have joined your page.

When you have multiple pages for a single station, your audience is not easily able to share information with each other unless they become fans of all your different sites – and most users are not apt to do this. Making the decision to become a “fan” signifies a certain affinity and trust the Web visitor has with your brand and you don’t want to alienate or confuse your audience by making them choose which station page they should be a fan of.

Less Work: Most stations do not have the personnel resources to handle more than one Facebook page. Sharing the effort for one page across different departments will ease resources AND provide the best view of the diversity your station has to offer. Subsequently, users are unlikely to return to your page unless you give them a reason to interact with a steady stream of new content they’ll enjoy and pass around. By presenting the breadth of information your station has to offer in one place on Facebook, the content of your Fan page will be an engaging and robust area which your diverse audience will appreciate and will have more reasons to make return visits (where they can comment, “like” and share the content your page is showcasing.).

If you have questions about Facebook or Engage social media products and services contact the Engage staff by emailing engage@pbs.org.