

The Social Media Big Four: Getting Friendly With Facebook

We have all heard a lot about social media technologies such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs. Our last column shared ways you can use LinkedIn for serious professional networking and more. In the continuation of our social media series, we'll explore the benefits, best uses, and strategies for another popular networking site with over 400 million users: Facebook (www.facebook.com).

Facebook is often misunderstood as an unprofessional platform where “younger folks” share news, pictures, and quiz results and play games with their personal friends – certainly not a place for professionals to spend precious networking time. **If you have had the same impression, read on and prepare to change your mind.**

Like LinkedIn, Facebook has a number of free features and enables you to make connections with others (called “friends” for your personal account and people who “like” your firm’s page). Once you’ve made these connections, you can see who their friends or connections are. Some other similarities include the ability to:

- Create a company page to re-enforce your **brand image** and establish your firm as an **attractive place to work** by appealing to younger recruits who value technology and companies that are embracing them
- Add **your firm’s events and share news** via status updates (called “what’s on your mind?”)
- Become fans of groups with others who have **similar interests** such as professional and alumni associations that have Facebook pages
- **Create groups** that revolve around a common interest or a specific conference
- **Seed discussion topics** to encourage your fans to interact and showcase your firm’s areas of expertise
- Conduct **research on your competitors, recruits**, and potential business associates or referral sources

Facebook differs from LinkedIn in that it provides the ability to post photographs, video, and other personal information that give the platform’s pages a more personal, warmer, community feel.

The best ways to use Facebook professionally – even over LinkedIn - are:

- **Posting pictures** of firm events and community service activities to promote your firm’s social and philanthropic events
- **Managing firm recruiting efforts**, building community around on-campus activities and employee events
- **Spotlighting your key people** and allowing others to know them better
- **Requesting feedback** and gaining insight into the opinions of your fans
- **Creating a corporate careers page** and forming a community of existing and prospective employees

- This will position your firm as a fun and friendly place to work and create an ongoing communication platform for staying in touch with talent in your field. If your firm engages in on-campus recruiting, you can use it to promote upcoming campus events and build distinct lists of fans who are affiliated with specific campuses. Consider appointing employee ambassadors to act as administrators of your careers page to allow prospective employees to ask questions of, and interact with, peers already working at your firm.
- **Integrating your corporate Facebook status updates** with your firm's main spokesperson's **Twitter account (www.twitter.com)** to reach multiple social media audiences with one communications effort

To get started on Facebook, simply create a corporate page or even two if you choose – one for building a community of clients, prospects, influencers, referral sources, vendors, and existing employees and another for attracting and communicating with prospective and existing employees. This functionality is free! Then, invite those who are interested to become fans of your firm so you can communicate regularly with them.

At ConvergenceCoaching, we believe in and have joined the Facebook revolution. Take a look at our corporate community page (and become a fan!) at www.facebook.com/convergencecoaching. And, if you haven't done so since our last article, connect with us at:

- www.linkedin.com/in/jenniferwilsonprofile
- www.linkedin.com/in/kristaremer

We hope to see you online!

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