

# SHOULD I USE FACEBOOK FOR MY BUSINESS

You have heard many wonderful things the social media can do for your business. Many of your competitors are already on Facebook. And you wonder if you should also jump on board and use Facebook. **Yu Chen Kuang of NUS-ISS** will take you through the pros and cons of using Facebook for your business.

There are over 3 million users in Singapore on Facebook last year and the number continues to grow. Should you take your brand to this social media platform? The answer to this is — it depends on the nature of your business. Let me explain.

## **Yes - If You are in the B2C Business such as Retail or Restaurants**

If your business involves selling to the end users or customers (B2C - Business to Consumer) directly such as the Retail or Food/Beverage industry, Facebook is a good choice. Examples of Food/Beverage companies using Facebook in Singapore include BreadTalk, Jumbo Seafood, KFC, KOI Bubble Tea and Hong Kong Sheng Kee Dessert. Examples of Retailers are Giordano, Times Bookstores, Robinsons and NTUC FairPrice.

BreadTalk currently has about 31,000 followers. Suppose they want to do a promotion of their bread, one single Facebook post will immediately reach 31,000 of their followers - all for FREE! Their followers can also share with their friends and the post can go viral. Such is the power of social media.

## **Yes - If Your Customers or Your Key Competitors are already on Facebook**

In business, the general rule is, "we go where the customers go." If your customers are mostly on Facebook, then you should be on there too.

If your key competitors are on Facebook, then you would also want to have a presence there. First, your customers must be there, which is why your competitors are there. Second, you have someone to follow, emulate and ultimately, surpass. Take a look at their Facebook pages. See what they write, what are their customers talking about (these are also your potential customers), and how your competitors engage them. Learn from them. This is the fastest way to using Facebook

effectively.

## **No - If You are in the B2B Business**

There are fewer success stories for B2B (Business to Business) companies on Facebook, both worldwide as well as in Singapore. One explanation is that people use Facebook mainly for connecting with their friends and family. Most people do not use Facebook for business-related matters. If they need to find business-related information, they tend to look into other platforms such as company websites, LinkedIn or Slideshare.

## **No - If You do not have the Time or Resource**

Facebook is not like a website. You cannot set it up and then forget about it. You need to set aside time to think about how to grow your fan base. The only way is to generate interesting and relevant content by maintaining your Facebook page regularly, if not every day.

Facebook is similar to a television channel. If a news channel keeps repeating the same news everyday for one week, a user will just switch to another channel. It is the same for Facebook. When a customer sees that a Facebook page does not get updated, he may go back once or twice, and then never visit again.

Also, unlike a website, you cannot talk solely about your company, products or services on your Facebook page. You will not get many followers. Facebook is like a magazine. Take any popular magazine, such as Female Magazine or PC Magazine. There is usually not more than 20% advertisements (ads). The bulk of the magazine should be useful or interesting articles, tips or reviews. No reader is interested in reading a magazine that comprises only of ads.

To be effective on Facebook, you should post at least one or two posts everyday. So if you don't have the time, you might need to assign someone to write some

useful or interesting posts for you.

## **No - If You are Not Interested in Connecting with Your Customers**

Facebook is fundamentally a communication tool — for people to connect with their friends and family by sharing their latest news, updates, photos and information. As such, people on Facebook do not usually like to be disrupted with ads when they are having conversations with their friends and family. Yes, you can do promotions and offers through Facebook, but the greatest strength in Facebook is in connecting directly with your customers and engaging them. It is very effective in building a community or an army of loyal supporters for your brands. Try not to use Facebook as a direct sales tool. Most of the time, any hard sell will turn people away.

## **It's your decision now**

Yes, Facebook is the most popular social media network, with more than 1.1 billion users worldwide. However, it might not be the most suitable for all types of business, especially if yours is a B2B business. Social Media is just a tool. Each social media platform, be it Facebook, LinkedIn, Youtube or Twitter, is a different tool to reach out to different target audience.

Knowing the criteria for the correct use of the tool, as what this article has explained for Facebook, will ensure that you are using the right tool for the right target audience.

To find out more about the social media courses provided by NUS-ISS, visit [www.iss.nus.edu.sg](http://www.iss.nus.edu.sg). SME-sponsored participants (Singaporeans & PRs) can get up to 90% funding of our NICF courses by Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA).

Article by **Yu Chen Kuang**, Lecturer & Consultant for Enterprise Social Business, NUS Institute of Systems Science (NUS-ISS)