9 steps to owning your neighborhood using Facebook

Gone are the days of farming with postcards. They're expensive, end up in the trash almost immediately and never reach further than the hand that plucks them from the mailbox.

If you want to be the go-to agent for a neighborhood, the easiest way is to show that you're part of the community, and the best way to demonstrate that is through regular, targeted posting to your Facebook business page.

You'll reach scores of people in a given neighborhood, and it will cost little to nothing.

Trying to be all things to all people never works well, so if you live in a big city, narrow your target — don't try to own all of San Francisco, for example. Instead, focus on the district or neighborhood that you live in.

You'll be more knowledgeable anyway — you already know what's going on in your own neighborhood and what people are talking about.

The key elements of your neighborhood-centric Facebook posts should be:

- Photos that you take yourself
- Inside information not everyone knows
- Genuine sincerity in what you post

9 ways to strengthen your position as a neighborhood's go-to agent

Here are a few ideas for things to post on Facebook that will generate the most engagement:

1. **Building developments**

People love to have the scoop about what's going into the vacant storefront down the street or what's happening with all the construction cranes they're seeing.

Do some legwork and find out. Include a photo of the current site/storefront and share it with the information you uncover.

See a sign in a window about a new restaurant coming soon? Track down the owners and get a preview of the menu that you can share on your Facebook page.

People love to have the scoop about what's going into the vacant storefront down the street.

Click To Tweet

2. **Interview local community members**

Find out the name of the guy who drives the ice cream truck, the bakery owner or the barista in the grocery store — people who neighbors see all the time but haven't gotten the chance to know. Interview them, and share it on your Facebook page.

3. **Visit neighborhood favorites seasonally**

Share seasonal posts at local favorites. Things like a drippy cone in your hand with the caption "Bob's ice cream parlor just started serving fresh peach sorbet again!" or a whipped-cream-topped coffee with "OK, it's officially winter — I had my mint mocha at Java Junction!"

4. **Try a new restaurant**

Take a photo of what you ordered, post it to your Facebook page and also let the establishment know — it might share the post on its Facebook page, too.

Be genuine, though. Don't bother posting if the food was bad — and likewise, don't gush over every little thing you try.

5. **Support local youth sports teams**

Is the lacrosse team having a fundraising car wash? Post about it a day or two before, include images of the team from its website, a link to its website and a geotag of where the car wash is being held.

The team will appreciate it, and parents will likely share your post.

6. **School fundraisers**

Is the local elementary school having a walk-a-thon to raise money for new playground equipment? Pay to have your logo added to the T-shirts for the event, and then share a photo of neighborhood kids participating (always get parental approval first).

Include a caption such as "Happy to support the kids at John F Kennedy Elementary today for their walk-a-thon."

7. **Showcase a local charity**

Choose one a month and write about their current fundraising efforts. It could be a homeless shelter looking for donations of blankets, a school book drive or even a neighborhood garage sale donating their earnings to a charity.

8. **Monthly neighborhood sales figures**

Create a monthly post showing the sales prices of all the home that sold in your neighborhood the month before. Use a high-quality image that clearly represents your community (it could be the sign welcoming visitors to town or the community pool that everyone recognizes), and link back to a blog post (or another landing page) that shows the data.

Encourage people to follow your Facebook page to see the data every month.

Create a monthly Facebook post showing the sales prices of the sold homes in your neighborhood.

Click To Tweet

9. **Create/join a closed neighborhood Facebook group**

Join the private Facebook group for your neighborhood, or create one if one doesn't already exist.

Not sure? Type in a name of your community in the Facebook search box — usually "closed group" will appear just below the name.

Use this as a place to interact with neighbors — not a place to sell real estate.

Where to find information to post

So, beyond chatter around the neighborhood, what are good sources of information?

- Neighborhood blogs
- On Twitter, follow local business journals (The Daily Journal of Commerce serves many cities), construction trade sites, high school sports and music departments, local police,

city/community council, local newspapers.
- Nextdoor

How to grow your audience

The goal is to have your Facebook posts be interesting enough that people begin to share and comment on them. As Facebook sees the level of engagement on your page increase, it'll begin to show your posts to more people, in turn increasing your reach without costing you a dime. As your reputation as a neighborhood expert grows, more people will begin to follow you.

If you want to reach more people at the start, you can always boost your posts through Facebook Ads and target them to people in your ZIP code.

It's important when setting up the audience that under "Locations" you choose "Everyone who lives here," and not the default "Everyone in this location," which would include everyone who has passed through.

Your ultimate goal with these posts is to have people say, "He's really active in the community" or "She always knows what's happening in the neighborhood."

Will it generate sales? Maybe. If nothing else, it keeps you at top-of-mind and exposes you to new followers.

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