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## **How To Use Facebook To Market Your Business**

**February 19, 2008**

**Anita Campbell:** Well, hello, I'm Anita Campbell, and I'm your host at Small Business Trends Radio. Thank you for joining us today.

**Steve Rucinski:** Hi, I'm Steve Rucinski, your co-host. Our show today is about how to use Facebook to market your business. But first we've got our tip of the week from [Jumpup.com](http://Jumpup.com), our sponsor.

Thank you so much, [Jumpup.com](http://Jumpup.com) by Intuit, for being a great sponsor and a wonderful supporter of small business. Many of us have heard of the social media site Facebook by now. Social media sites can have some real benefits for small businesses. If you haven't familiarized yourself with Facebook yet, today is a great chance to do so.

You're probably wondering, how can I leverage Facebook to market my business?

**Anita Campbell:** Well, Steve, today's guest is going to answer that question for us. Our featured guest today is Shama Hyder, chief marketing expert and founder of After the Launch. Shama is an expert marketing consultant to independent professionals and professional service firms around the world. Today she's going to share her secrets and insights to making the most out of Facebook.

Welcome, Shama, we're really pleased to have you with us today.

**Shama Hyder:** Hey, Anita, the pleasure's all mine. Thank you so much for inviting me.

**Anita Campbell:** I hope I'm pronouncing your name correctly. Is that correct, Shama?

**Shama Hyder:** You've got it. That's fine.

**Anita Campbell:** OK, terrific. Great, I had fun looking at your website earlier. It looks like you've got some great resources on it. But today we're going to talk about Facebook. The first question I have for you is how exactly is Facebook different from other social media sites that people might be familiar with, such as MySpace or LinkedIn, sites such as that?

**Shama Hyder:** Great question, Anita. Facebook is wonderful because it really meshes the best of what you might find at MySpace or LinkedIn, for example. Facebook was started originally for college students, so it was a very natural progression to offer it to professional as they went into the business world.

For one, you're going to find a lot more professionals; you're going to find a lot more small business owners on Facebook. MySpace has a very personal quality. It's used a lot to talk with friends.

LinkedIn, on the other hand, is very professional. You have more or less a static profile. Facebook kind of combines the two where you can really blur the lines between professional and personal.

It's a wonderful tool. That's what I think really makes it different, that it combines the best of both worlds.

**Anita Campbell:** It's interesting that you should bring up those differences. For example, I've often thought of LinkedIn as being kind of an online resume that you keep updated at all times. In a way, it operates like that, doesn't it?

**Shama Hyder:** Exactly. LinkedIn is wonderful because it allows you to kind of see your network, connect with other people in your industry. But again, it's very static. You don't have the fun element that comes along with Facebook. For example, you can't write on people's virtual walls. You can't leave people messages. I think it makes it harder to connect. LinkedIn is a great tool to establish your current network, whereas Facebook is great to expand your current network.

**Anita Campbell:** OK. Let's talk about that a little bit, because in a way, Facebook has a lot of fun things on it. But after you get so many invitations for a glass of wine or vampire date or whatever all these crazy things are after a while you start thinking, is this really a business tool or is this some social thing that's going to quickly fall out of flavor? I don't know, what do you think? Is this a real business tool?

**Shama Hyder:** It is, Anita. It really depends on the way you look at it. It's definitely got some funny aspects. It's got some of those things that make you say, "What is that about?" But on the other hand, it's a great relationship building tool. If you use Facebook as a relationship building tool, that's how you can really market your business and get out there.

That's what keeps it from being just a social site, because it makes it so easy for you to connect with people you may not have met before and really reach out and build these relationships on an online platform that's serious yet at the same time can be fun.

**Anita Campbell:** Why don't we talk specifically then about how businesses can use Facebook to market their businesses. Here I'm talking primarily about smaller business and professional, independent professionals or entrepreneurs. What are some of the ways you can use Facebook as a marketing tool?

**Shama Hyder:** Right. There's three main ways. Facebook is a great marketing tool for small businesses because it's free. That's the biggest reason. It's fairly easy to navigate. So the first thing would be to put up a great profile. Right now when you type in my name in Google - and I'm on lots of pages - my Facebook profile pops up about sixth. That's very strong, and it's wonderful for search engine rankings, just to get your name out there.

Establishing a strong profile is the basis of your entire Facebook marketing strategy because it

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really allows you to show what you can do, who you can help, what you have to offer. That's fantastic.

The second way to use Facebook is to reach out to other people in your industry, really to make those connections.

I know bloggers who don't check their email but will check and respond to Facebook messages. It's a great way to reach out to others who are out there and share similar interests, and see where you might be able to leverage that and help out both of your businesses. The third way is to reach your target market. One really neat way to do that is Facebook offers a feature that lets you see friends of friends.

So each week I get about five or six new people who add me who say, "Hey, we've got 15 friends in common." That immediately is a great conversation starter. I'm open to whatever they have to offer, and I'm listening. They've got my attention.

Those are the three ways to really leverage Facebook to market yourself well.

**Anita Campbell:** It's interesting that we're having this radio show today, because last week I was in New York at an event, and someone came up to me and introduced himself. He said, "Oh, we're Facebook friends." It's one of those things where he had reached out through Facebook, through being connected with other friends and so on, and had established a connection there.

It was great because suddenly in meeting him in person, it wasn't just someone I'd just met at a conference, it really was someone who, gee, there's a bigger connection here because we're Facebook friends. True story.

**Shama Hyder:** Right. Yeah, it allows you to create that relationship much faster than you might have otherwise. To say, "We have 15 friends in common", you're thinking, "Really? Wow!. That's great. Because obviously you trust those 15 people. At least I hope you trust those 15 people. So that's wonderful to have that immediate connection with someone.

**Anita Campbell:** So would you recommend that small businesses, once they've set up a profile for the business person, actually go about and start to expand the network by reaching out and looking at the profiles of their friends and seeing who friends of their friends are? Is that the idea?

**Shama Hyder:** Yeah, that's definitely one way to go about it. The first thing you want to do after you set up your profile is put your current friends on there. Really start reconnecting because I can guarantee that you haven't kept in touch with all those people who are going to ambush you, so to speak, on Facebook. So it's a great way to kind of reestablish those relationships and start sharing a little bit about yourself and learning more about them.

Then it's best to start out with people whom you have most connections with. Let's say you have 20-25 friends in common with someone. That's not uncommon on Facebook. Go ahead and contact them and make sure you have something - that you know something about them, that

you have some similar ground.

If you contact someone out of the blue and add them as a friend and don't send them a message, the chances are they may not accept you. But sending them a message - even if it's "Hey, I read your blog. I enjoy your work", whatever that may be - instantly makes that connection.

**Anita Campbell:** What about writing on people's message walls? The message wall - I think that's the name of it - is basically a little place where people can come to your profile page and they can leave a message. Is that a good way? What happens when you get a message? Should you respond on your own page, or should you go to that person's profile and leave a message at the page that someone else come from?

**Shama Hyder:** That's a good question. To think about the virtual wall, you can think about it like a regular wall. That's a great way, because the wall is equivalent to something of a hello on the street. You run into someone, you wave, it's very informal. There's no expectation. It's just a casual way of getting to know people. So that's a fantastic way if you're a little nervous about sending someone a message. Just post on their wall. Let them know whatever it is that's on your mind. Just know that other people can also read that. So if you want to send a private message, you want to message them and don't write on the wall.

If someone leaves you a message, then by all means go back to their page and leave a message on their wall. You can usually do that by just clicking the person's name that's left a message for you.

This is great, because this is how you build a community. This is how you start conversations. Like I was saying, Facebook is really a relationship tool. The more relationships you make on this, the better you can really market your services.

**Anita Campbell:** Are there any downsides to using Facebook?

**Shama Hyder:** Facebook is a hard tool to mess up. The trick to Facebook is really maintaining that balance. In terms of downsides on Facebook, you're really thinking about things like - just know that this is a public platform. Maybe putting up your Halloween pictures that should be reserved for your closest friends may not be the best idea on Facebook.

You can do reputation damage, so to speak. You really want to be careful. Sometimes people, when they're behind a computer, forget that it's still them and that's their persona that they're showing to the world. So that's the one, maybe, downfall of Facebook where you do want to be very careful.

On the other hand, you don't want to come off as too stuffy. That's for LinkedIn. That's where you have a very static page. Facebook is about community, it is about writing on each other's wall, creating messages, sharing and getting into discussions. It's a very lively, active community. You really have to find that balance.

**Anita Campbell:** I know Steve has some questions for you, so I think I'll turn it over to Steve at this point.

**Steve Rucinski:** Thanks, Anita. Hi, Shama, thanks for being on.

**Shama Hyder:** Hey, Steve. It's my pleasure.

**Steve Rucinski:** First I've got to confess, I'm a real rookie at MySpace. I'm not sure I've ever actually been on a MySpace page. So this is all fascinating to me. Now I do have some experience with LinkedIn. I know there's something called Facebook Groups. What's a Facebook Group and how do they work?

**Shama Hyder:** Facebook Groups are online groups. They're people who share a common interest coming together. Anyone can start a Facebook Group. The groups are great because they're often like the way offline groups might work, or if you think like Yahoo Groups or Google Groups. It's the same concept as Facebook's. People gather, you have officers, you have a discussion board and you have a message board. You can trade messages with the members, you can host events. So really think about it just like an offline group that has moved to an online platform.

**Steve Rucinski:** And you said anyone can start a group.

**Shama Hyder:** Right. Absolutely. Anyone can start a group. It's wonderful for small businesses that want to market themselves, to bring together people in their industry. For example, I host a professional services marketing group and that's been a great way for me to connect to others in my industry and people who may be potential clients of mine.

**Steve Rucinski:** If there's a group already existing, do I have to be invited to join a group? Do I request to join a group? How does that process work?

**Shama Hyder:** Right. There are a couple of groups on Facebook. One is public which anyone can join. I want to venture to say about 80% of the groups are public. Private groups are something different where you do have to be invited in. The way most people join groups is they get an invitation from a friend or when they log on they see a note, "18 of your friends have joined Group XYZ." And you say, "Well, that looks interesting." That's how you join. But the process is really simple.

**Steve Rucinski:** OK. Do you have any personal success stories you've had with Facebook that you can share?

**Shama Hyder:** Yeah Facebook's been a great tool for me and my business. Every week I connect with someone or another, may that be potential clients or a blog reader. It's wonderful to see that community build. It's nice because it's always wonderful to know you have a network, but when you see it in front of you expand like that, that's something else.

**Steve Rucinski:** Being sort of a social networking rookie, what's the best way to approach someone? You might have mentioned it before, this wallpaper thing, or I forget what you called it. If you haven't met somebody but maybe you want to connect, what's the best way to do that?

**Shama Hyder:** The best way to do it is just point out a connection that you share. Because it's online, people are sometimes not sure of who else is lurking. So the best way to maybe see is to see how many friends you share, and say, "Hey, we're friends with Bob Jones," or, "We share these common traits." It's a great way to get started. The wall is another way, where you just leave a "hi." Say, "Hey, I enjoy your work. I read your post today", or whatever that may be. It's just about reaching out and sharing common ground with people.

**Steve Rucinski:** Great. I have a little different observation, and I'm just looking for your input. All of these sites, you've got to commit to be operating within in them. It's not something you start and walk away from. You've got to be active in using it as a tool for your business. Is that a safe assumption?

**Shama Hyder:** Yeah, it's a safe assumption. I spend about an hour total a week on Facebook, which is very good just in terms of marketing. Because the response I get and the people I meet, and it leads to different ventures, it leads to different partnerships. That's why it's a wonderful tool. But Facebook is not something that's going to take up a lot of your time. It can, and you do have to be careful, because it's very easy to get carried away in the fun aspect and forget what the real purpose is.

But if you're really just looking at Facebook as a networking tool, as a marketing tool, then what you want to do is limit that and see what's the value you're getting for the time you're putting in.

**Steve Rucinski:** Does Facebook take the place of a website? If I have a Facebook page and I'm building connections and a network - or is there a way to integrate Facebook with another business website I have? What are your thoughts?

**Shama Hyder:** It definitely doesn't replace a website, because for all the people that are on Facebook, there's a lot that are not. But a quick way to combine the two on your profile, put up your website. List it on there. Write about what you do. Your profile page is your real way to connect to the world, and it's a wonderful portal for you to take them to your website. For example, I have my blog syndicated on Facebook. I get people on my profile that read posts on my profile page and then decide to click over to my website.

**Steve Rucinski:** If you had to leave small business owners with just one piece of advice about Facebook, what would you have them do?

**Shama Hyder:** OK. That's hard to sum it up in once piece. But I would say, don't be scared to try to new things. It's very hard to mess up. You're not going to do damage that you can't undo. Just be careful that you keep your professional persona professional and try new things on Facebook, because it's so new. Wherever you take it is really up to you.

**Steve Rucinski:** Sounds like "Just do it!"

**Shama Hyder:** Pretty much, yeah.

**Steve Rucinski:** OK, thanks.

**Anita Campbell:** Hey, Shama, in terms of practical applications, for example, one of the things I have received off of Facebook are event invitations. Is this a good way to spread the word about your events? How would you rank it in terms of publicizing an event that you might be participating in or holding as a business owner?

**Shama Hyder:** Fabulous, fabulous question, Anita. Yeah, events rank right up there. I would say it ranks right after your profile but before group because I've seen so many people put together events and I've seen overnight success. It's especially great if you do something like a teleseminar or webinar. People don't have to be present and you can really reach out to a lot more people than you would have otherwise, maybe by just posting on your blog and whatnot. But events are wonderful. It's great if you have a group and you can leverage that group to get the event information out there. That's one of the most fantastic ways in Facebook that you can market a specific event.

**Anita Campbell:** In terms of speed, how quickly can and should you expect results. Because I think we want to set expectations appropriately, right? Is this something where it's going to transform your business overnight, or is this more a matter of working at it over time.

**Shama Hyder:** My answer to that, Anita, is it depends. For example, let's say you're getting on Facebook and you already have 800 friends on there. Obviously you're going to see more results than someone who has maybe 10-15 friends and has to build up a network. So it really depends on your network. Usually for most people I've seen who go on there and have some people that they know already, others that they don't know, it takes a couple of months.

That couple of months is mostly because it takes that much time for you to get comfortable writing on people's walls, learning how that Facebook community really engages with each other. That's where you're going to see some lag time.

**Anita Campbell:** I want to talk for a moment about Facebook apps, or applications. For anyone who may not be familiar with that, I'll sort of give my down-and-dirty definition of Facebook Applications. That is basically some interactive application that you can use in connection with your Facebook profile. There are a lot of these out there, and I'm wondering is that a good strategy for a business to create a Facebook app? And if so, what do you need to really make it interesting for a person, which causes people to want to use your app?

**Shama Hyder:** In terms of small businesses, I'm not sure if that would be my recommendation or the best investment for small business owners to make into an application, just because it's in a very early stage right now. For bigger corporations, they have that marketing budget where they

can put out thousands of dollars to have an application built and they can take the hit if it doesn't work. There's not been any specific research done or anything that says, "Here's the return on investment", I wouldn't recommend it for small business owners.

What I do recommend, however, is leveraging applications that are already out there to market your business.

One of them, I was telling Steve earlier, was a little widget or an application that lets you syndicate your blog directly on your Facebook profile. Now, that's a great way for a small business to get exposure. They don't have to pay to make that application because it's already available.

So that would be my advice. Really leverage what's out there to get the most bang for your buck, rather than going out there and investing in something where ROI has not necessarily been established.

**Anita Campbell:** OK, great. Well, Shama, I want to switch gears and ask you a little bit about your business. "After the Launch", that's a great name and the name of your company. That conveys so much in three words. I think what it means is, after you launch your business, what happens next. Right?

**Shama Hyder:** Right, exactly. That's pretty much it. Most people, when they start their business, just get really excited and into it. That's great. But the problem with a lot of them is they don't know how to market it. They don't know how to get those clients that they were hoping would see the open sign and come rushing in.

That's what my company does. We help independent professional and professional service firms who are struggling to attract more clients.

**Anita Campbell:** What are the kinds of things that you do? There's this new category these days called "social media marketing." Is that what you do? Or do you do a broader range of online marketing?

**Shama Hyder:** Our marketing is very comprehensive. We offer online marketing search and optimization. We teach, often, professionals how to market themselves, because that's a big one. We do include social media marketing. We try not to say, "Here are the services we offer, you have to pick from them." We try to really look at what a client needs, where their clientele might be found, and help them create a strategy and a plan to get those clients. If that may include social media, great, and if not, there's definitely more ways to go about it.

**Anita Campbell:** Oh, I see. OK. So how do you work with companies? I'm just curious, in a nutshell. Is this like a monthly retainer type of thing or is it that you work on a project basis or what?

**Shama Hyder:** We have clients around the world and we have different project styles with each.

Often with independent professionals, we'll do a monthly coaching consulting style of work where we're actually teaching them how to market themselves, how to go out there and get their clients. Other times there are companies that just outsource their marketing to us and let us run with it. That's sometimes on a project basis and other times it's on a retainer where they just leave it all up to us and we're their outsourced marketing team.

**Anita Campbell:** I see. OK, great. Well, anything else as far as wrap-up comments here? We've got about two minutes left.

**Shama Hyder:** I'll just add that Facebook, I know, just seems like the next social fad. I can't say it's going to be around 10 years from now, but I can say that it's hot right now. If small businesses will jump on the bandwagon I'm sure they're really going to see a good value for the time they put into it.

**Anita Campbell:** OK, good. Where can people find out more about you, Shama?

**Shama Hyder:** They can go to my website; that's probably the best way. My website address is [afterthelaunch.com](http://afterthelaunch.com). There are tons of articles there, lots of free resources. I'm sure anybody who's struggling to attract clients is going to find that a very useful place.

**Anita Campbell:** OK. I guess you can be found on Facebook, too.

**Shama Hyder:** That's right. Just type in my name. I've got over a thousand friends now, so I'm sure we have friends in common.

**Anita Campbell:** OK. Thank you so much, Shama Hyder, chief marketing expert and founder of "After The Launch". You have been very informative and we appreciate you joining us today.

**Shama Hyder:** Thank you so much, Anita and Steve. I really appreciate you guys inviting me here.

**Anita Campbell:** You have just heard another in-depth entrepreneurial interview on Small Business Trends Radio. I want to thank you for listening today. You can find archives of this show on our radio website on the web at [smbtrendwire.com](http://smbtrendwire.com). And of course, you can find us here every Tuesday at 1:30 PM East Coast US time.

Until next week, I'm your host, Anita Campbell.

**Steve Rucinski:** And I'm Steve Rucinski. That's a wrap.

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