



The new face of Facebook

Facebook has evolved over the past 10 years and in the past year alone it has undergone some big changes. Katie Deighton explores how retailers are using it today

It has become clear that simply reproducing online stores on a Facebook page is not the way to win customers over. As Facebook's head of retail and ecommerce Nicolas Franchet tells *Retail Week*: "People don't come to Facebook to purchase – they come to check in on their family and friends. The conversation between retailers and consumers on the platform has massively evolved from a year ago."

Online store replicas often mean a slower route to purchase. Franchet points out that Facebook shops simply "are not as exciting to our users as going to the real thing".

Facebook interaction

But that doesn't mean Facebook is no longer part of the purchasing story. A January study by research firm Infosys, which interviewed 1,000 consumers in the US, revealed that more consumers interact with a company's Facebook page than they do with the brand's own website. More significantly, the study revealed that 89% of consumers who interact with a retailer online through any social media outlet say the interaction has an impact on their purchase.



Carphone Warehouse used Facebook to increase its audience reach

So how can retailers use Facebook to make the most of these habits?

Many believe Facebook should be used to create a community rather than push a sale. Darshan Sanghrajka, marketing director at social media agency Super Being Labs, says: "Retailers need to understand more about the Facebook users they are communicating with. The amount of data available on the platform makes it easy to know a lot about each person."

He points out that retailers can use this data to work out what customers are looking for. "Give the users value without selling anything to them. For example, if you're a fashion retailer, then provide interesting and engaging content around fashion – don't sell them your goods, give them something to consume," he says.

"Provide advice, videos and fun. Create a community around the needs of your customer. Then every so often, that community will be receptive to offers you show them."

Tools of engagement

Franchet agrees that subtlety is called for when using Facebook to market products. He says: "We are seeing retailers embed us in their multichannel strategies. They're building up their presence on Facebook, where a lot of their customers are spending time."

With this in mind Facebook has created various tools that retailers can use on their pages. Either by working directly with Facebook's in-house creative team or straight from their own computers, retailers are seeing results. The new Call to Action tool allows retailers to add buttons to their page such as 'shop now' or 'learn more'. Another feature lets companies upload an offer on a barcode, which customers can print and scan at a checkout. Another big growth area for Facebook has been mobile – the company says that on average, about one out of every three people in the UK visit Facebook every day on mobile.

"Retailers now are using three to four key products that didn't exist a year ago," says Franchet. "We want to keep trying things." As the three retailers to the right show, clever use of different tools can bring impressive results.

THREE RETAILERS USING FACEBOOK IN NEW WAYS

Swarovski

Campaign aim To boost engagement with the brand and create awareness of its new watch collection.

Action plan To use Facebook acquisition Instagram to engage customers with the #CatchTheLight campaign. To create awareness of its watch collection and the Instagram campaign using Facebook 'page post ads', targeting women who are fans of luxury brands. To display ads on the mobile news feed to target customers any time, anywhere.

Products used Instagram and Facebook's page publishing platform reached more people than a usual post.

Results

- 2.9 times greater engagement with Swarovski's Facebook page
- 21,000 interactions with page posts
- 5,000 clicks through to Instagram
- 22,500 new Instagram photos tagged #Swarovski
- 4,400 Instagram photos tagged #CatchTheLight
- 3,600 new Instagram followers

Sainsbury's

Campaign aim To build awareness, drive in-store sales and make an emotional connection with shoppers.

Action plan To use Facebook page posts to drive interest and engagement with fans. To use Facebook ads to increase the campaign's reach and target ads at women. To stagger other media (such as TV advertising) in line with Facebook content.

Products used Pages, ads, measurement and insights.

Results

- Facebook and TV reached 91% of the female target audience
- Facebook alone reached 43% of the female target audience
- 1.5 million women who did not see the campaign on TV saw it on Facebook

Carphone Warehouse

Campaign aim To increase online orders of the Pay Monthly Smartphone and Pay Monthly Half Price promotions.

Action plan To post information about discounted tariffs and handsets to Facebook. To use Facebook ads to increase audience reach. To use mobile audience targeting to focus on customers based on phone usage.

Products used Page publishing, mobile placements, news feed placements, advanced advertising.

Results

- Facebook contributed to 48% of media-driven sales
- The retailer achieved its goals with 70% lower cost per acquisition than all other display media
- It also saw a 68% increase in online desktop orders from Facebook news feed ads

