

Using Facebook to Your Business Advantage Four Quick Tips

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Recent data suggests Facebook has more than 500 million users – but how can you use Facebook as a business development tool? Unfortunately, there is no “magic bullet” activity. Instead, it’s important to treat Facebook like a plant that needs proper nurturing to prosper. Not enough time spent networking and interacting, and your contacts may wither on the vine. Too much time spent “Facebooking” may begin to drown out your day-to-day duties as an arborist or business owner.

“Finding the right balance of Facebook activity to support your business may take a bit of experimentation,” said Mike Shefky, public relations and marketing strategist for The Ritterbusch Group. “But a good rule of thumb would be to carve out one to two hours of dedicated Facebook-business time a week, see how that works for a month, then reevaluate and adjust accordingly.”

Once you know your way around Facebook, try these helpful tips to grow you circle of influence.

- TIP 1** **Join a Facebook Group** – joining a ready-made Facebook group allows you to share information and links. Use Facebook to connect with social, community, business, and arborist groups you identify with.
- TIP 2** **Integrate Your Website and Facebook Pages** – promote your Facebook page on your website and give visitors a way to establish deeper connections with you and your business. On Facebook, post occasional links back to information found on your website that may be helpful or relevant.
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- TIP 3** **Don't Force Business Messages** – spamming your Facebook Friends with nothing but “business advertising” will do more harm than good. Discuss your business or related arboricultural information in the flow of natural conversation or when the situation warrants it. There’s nothing wrong with the occasional business post, just don’t overdo it.
- TIP 4** **Create Useful Friends Lists** – divide your Facebook friends into various business and social categories to help focus your messages to each. This can help ensure the right messages are reaching the right groups of people at appropriate intervals.