



SOCIAL MEDIA MUNICIPAL FACEBOOK CONNECT WITH CITIZENS

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Embed Facebook as a part of your wider communication and/customer service strategies
- Establish processes for **monitoring**, posting and responding
- Provide adequate **resources**
- Follow **guidelines** and procedures
- Respond **quickly** to questions
- Be **personal**

FIND OUT MORE FROM OUP

- Report: "Social Media Monitoring Tools"
- Local Government Denmark report on voter participation in Danish local elections
- Facebook Guidelines (Karlstad)
- Measure your social media maturity at www.socialmediamaturity.eu

More opinions, case studies and stories at www.opening-up.eu/socialmedia

Today, more than half of the population throughout the North Sea Region can be found on Facebook. Most people use it to keep up with friends and family, share photos and videos, and comment on others people's posts. However, a large number of users also want to keep up with news and find out about what is happening in their city.

Most users check Facebook more than once per day, so this is a **fast channel** for getting out information. More and more municipalities are now recognising the benefits of Facebook and starting to embed it into their communication channels. People expect communication to be quick and it is important to be where your citizens are. Today Facebook offers a valuable for your organisation while it gives citizens a better service.

But even if you can create a page for free, using Facebook will still cost your organisation **time and planning**. As soon as your page goes live, you are under pressure to be active – no-one likes a page where nothing happens or it takes more than a day to get answers to questions. Facebook opens a whole new dimension of customer service and also involves your citizens in ways that you might not have experienced before.

It is important to have a plan – know what you want your Facebook presence to achieve, but be aware that people will expect two-way communication. Of course you want to reach as many people as possible in the area, but don't forget to try to **engage** with them on the page so they become part of the communication, not just consumers. Citizens sometimes have much better answers than you do.

The key to success is you and your organisation's commitment to post, comment and answer questions. Just remember to be a little less formal and a lot more personal.

So don't give up just because you have only 97 'likes' after a month. Instead, create goals, celebrate your progress and remember this: every 'like' counts because each one is from a citizen who wants to hear what you have to say.

PULL QUOTE: **"FACEBOOK PAGES GIVE MUNICIPALITIES A REPUTATION BOOST"**

WE LOVE FACEBOOK!

A survey in Denmark shows that local Facebook pages strengthen the municipality's reputation and local democracy.

A user survey across 19 municipal Facebook pages by Local Government Denmark (LGDK) found that 8 out of 10 citizens were satisfied with their municipality Facebook page. Half of users said the pages had given them a more positive perception of their town because a presence on Facebook suggested the municipality was open, modern and service-minded.

The survey concludes that Facebook pages give municipalities a reputation boost which otherwise would cost the municipalities a small fortune to obtain through normal advertising.

The survey also revealed that Facebook pages strengthen local democracy. Almost three-quarters of people said the pages give them a better opportunity to participate in the debate about what is going on in the municipality. Forty percent of citizens felt that they better contact with the local politicians.

It appears that Facebook can reach new audiences, including people who would not normally look for news from the municipality and citizens who have not previously been politically active. The platform lowers the bar for participation in the local democracy as more people follow local issues and new residents have the courage to speak.



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A LIKE FOR A LIKE

'Likes' on Facebook help to give posts and pages more visibility and appear on more people's news feeds. We struggled to reach the first 1000 likes, but this number seems to have been the critical mass for us. After this our traffic and conversations increased significantly, and one year later we had 3000 likes.

Our statistics show that Facebook is a strong channel. Every post gets hundreds, if not over a thousand, views – significantly higher than views of the same story on our website. People primarily visit the website for specific information, whereas Facebook gives them news and inspiration on a platform which they already use in their everyday life.

DO FACEBOOK ADS WORK?

We have paid to place adverts on Facebook and sponsor content. People are quite sceptical about advertising, but it has certainly worked for us.

We advertised a course for young parents and also sponsored stories about a new cycling and fitness route in the area. We got a lot of feedback and more interaction on these posts than normal.

