

Facebook could lead to your next contract

Recent additions to [Facebook](#)'s functionality allow businesses to establish their own identity, according to a new [white paper](#) published by Brighton-based digital communications agency site [AI Digital](#). Facebook users, both individual and corporate, now have a choice of pages that include:

- o Facebook Pages
- o Social Ads, aimed at getting groups of individuals together
- o Classified Adverts
- o Applications
- o Groups.

The launch of [Pages](#) within Facebook is of huge importance to corporate users of the site, according to Jennie Burraway, Marketing and PR Manager at AI Digital. She told ContractorCalculator: "Pages allow non-individuals, like companies, to create profiles that work in a similar way to personal profiles."

And why is this important? "Previously, companies had no real outlet on Facebook," continues Jennie, "but with the launch of Pages a business can upload information, pictures and videos, create relationships and participate interactively as if they were an individual."

Social Media and Web2.0 driving change

According to Jennie, who with her 35 colleagues at AI Digital work on digital campaigns throughout Europe and the USA, "We've seen a paradigm shift in the way people use the web, driven by social networking sites, so it is no surprise business wants in on the act."

The advantage of social networking when engaging with businesses is that the online conversation is genuinely two-way, with, according to AI Digital's research, companies that encourage and manage this relationship are seeing tangible business benefits. Specific examples from the recruitment sector include:

- o Attracting new candidates
- o Generating new advertisers
- o Building brand loyalty
- o Creating competitive advantage
- o Deepening the relationship with select customers.

But social network participation of this type comes with a health warning. Jennie explains: "The interactivity and transparency that are behind the power of social networking can also be the downfall of firms that use inappropriate spin in their profiles."

Recruitment advertising on Facebook

Although well known sites such as [LinkedIn](#), [MySpace](#) and [Bebo](#) have considerable user bases, Facebook is one of the fastest growing with, from a recruiter's perspective, a more attractive demographic of younger, more tech savvy graduates.

Pages on Facebook are just the first step for a recruiter to establish their online presence, so canny contractors seeking work would be wise to visit other types of information exchange and advertising on social networking sites.

Social Ads

Facebook has borrowed Google's cost per click and AdWords concepts and applied them to its [Social Ads](#). Recruiters can target, for example, location, age and gender, so the ad will only appear in front of users with the specified profile, and the advertiser only pays if the user clicks-through.

Contractors and freelancers hoping to benefit from this type of advertising would be well advised to have accurate and up-to-date Facebook profiles to ensure targeted ads get to them.

Classified Adverts

Classified Adverts can be found on Facebook's Market Place. Right now, there are no costs to advertise and there are relatively few recruiters using the Market Place, compared with, for example, property adverts, so they really stand out.

Recruiters can benefit from the brand association with Facebook and being seen to be being more 'in-touch' with the lives of their potential recruits. AI Digital suggests that even job boards may benefit by posting relevant vacancies with a link back to their main sites.

Applications

Facebook opened its website to external developers last year to encourage programs that enhance the website's functionality. The output has varied considerably from simple games to complex search programs, but given the inherently viral nature of a social networking site and the ability to subtly build a relationship over time, the advantages to recruiters – and therefore to contractors looking for work – can be considerable.

However, as Jennie points out: "This strategy has the biggest opportunities, though also offers the greatest challenge. You need a specialist who has experience of working with Facebook and the creative capacity to develop an idea that can truly add value for Facebook users."

Groups

Before Pages was created, Groups offered the best route for firms to engage with their customers, with each Group acting as a mini-forum. In fact, using Groups provides companies and recruiters with further touchpoints with potential candidates. So contractors can also identify new potential clients by participating in Groups themselves, expanding the range of vacant positions open to them.

Contracting options

As the new functionality of Facebook gets more widely used by recruiters, and other social networking sites start getting in on the act, contractors who follow the trend closely are likely, in the short term at least, to have an advantage when it comes to finding a wider range of new contracts to apply for.

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