

Five tips for running a good Facebook group

 By [Analyze Viljoen](#)

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You may love or hate social media. It has its pros and cons and many will debate that people don't talk anymore. For me it is quite the opposite. I find that people connect and "talk" easier than ever.



It may be online via a social media portal with the help of technology but I don't see the problem with that. Social media just makes it easier to find like-minded people with interests and opinions you relate to. It also makes it effortless to connect and communicate with them.

I met most of my latest friends on Facebook. It all started when a friend saw a controversial opinion I posted, and added me to a small group of like-minded people. Before long we were arranging events to meet each other and hang out. Those same people have become good friends. We connect on Facebook groups on more or less a daily basis but that is not all. We also often see each other in "real life". We braai, we go on trips, and we do that thing people say no-one does any more – we talk. We talk online and we talk in person. We are friends and without Facebook groups we would not know each other.

Anyone can start a group on Facebook. A group can have just about any focus you can think of. The success of a group depends on two main things. Firstly, the admins can make or break a group. Secondly, the group depends on members who participate with relevant and frequent posts and comments. You can only have good members if you have a good admin or admin team. If you run a Facebook group, or want to start one, these five tips may help you to make it a good experience for all the members.

1. Decide on the level of privacy

Is it a group about a general topic? Then you can have an open group that anyone can find and join. Examples of these are groups with a focus on a specific hobby or activity like cooking, gardening, hiking etc. If you need more privacy and control over who joins, a closed group is a good idea. There are also secret groups, with high privacy settings. Only members can find the group and see posts. Form a secret group if your topic is highly controversial or a private matter that you don't want to share with anyone but chosen group members. Members will not participate if they don't feel safe.

In your group settings you can also set it up in such a way that any member can add a new member, or that admins need to approve new members. Read through all the options for group privacy [here](#) and choose the best option for your group.

2. Good content

Regular posts about relevant subjects will engage your members. Ask open ended questions. Reply and react to comments.

Tag members in posts. Post interesting articles and memes. Invite and inspire members to do the same.

3. Lay down the rules, but don't be a Nazi

The rules depend on the group. Be realistic when you identify them. Make sure rules are clear and pin them to the top of the group's timeline. Think of things like whether advertising, swearing, personal pictures, off-topic posts or arguments will be tolerated. It can be tricky to get the balance right. Too many rules scare people away and too few can result in chaos. I generally have four rules for my groups: Treat everyone with respect, even if you disagree and engage in debate. No discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation and age. Stick to the topic – don't post inspirational quotes, news articles or religious messages in a cooking group.

Be clear about the outcome of breaking the rules. For example: Swear words or nudity will be removed. Repeat offenders will be barred from the group. Enforce the rules. There is not much more to say about that. If you said certain posts will be removed, make sure you remove them. Be strict and consistent. It will show offending members where the boundaries are and the other members will feel safe and happy.

4. Add or accept only members that you trust

Look at their profiles before accepting new members. Make sure it is a legitimate profile. This is especially important for secret and closed groups, such as small friendship groups or groups that focus on moral debates, politics, religion etc.. Do you or other members know the person personally? As group admin you have a responsibility to your members to keep the information they share in the group as safe as possible. Read [here](#) how to identify a fake profile.

5. Keep your finger on the pulse

You have to spend time on a group to make it work. Visit your group at least once a day. Keep an eye on group notifications. Act when someone reports a post. Wish members a happy birthday or congratulate them with a new baby, job or accomplishment. Welcome new members and introduce them to the group. If it is too much for one person to handle, appoint more admins to help you.

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