

# BEST PRACTICES: FACEBOOK

How to run a successful Facebook page for your local union.

## INTRODUCTION

This is the Facebook Best Practices training presented by the Communications Department of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. We originally conducted this training as part of the New York City Central Labor Council digital training series in spring 2015.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective for this training is to take your Facebook page to the next level by cultivating an engaging and energetic space for followers.

## AGENDA

First we'll do some housekeeping and go over starting a page, along with some basics to keep in mind. Then we'll talk about ground rules – how to deflect trolls and keep the conversation on track. We'll talk about what to post, when to post, and how to post. Finally, we will go over insights and tracking.

## HOUSEKEEPING

It is helpful to go over the differences between a Facebook *group* and a Facebook *page*, since they serve different functions.

A Facebook page is public-facing, and it's easier to control the messaging since you have total command over what gets posted. The IATSE runs a Facebook page, and we'll be talking about running pages throughout the this training

Facebook groups are more conversational and informal. You can edit privacy settings in groups:

- Public – anyone can join or be added or invited by a member,
- Closed – anyone can ask to join or be added or invited by a member,
- Secret – anyone can join, but they have to be added or invited by a member. It's important to think about what you want out of your Facebook presence, and that will help you decide which is better.

If you're unsure how to set up a Facebook page, take a look at the social media guide we created for union members: <http://iatse.net/member-resources/social-media-guide>. It will walk you through setting up a Facebook page and Twitter account.



Once your page is up and running, you need to consider page roles. Facebook allows multiple people to manage pages, and there are five different roles, each with a different level of management ability. It's probably best to only have one or two people in charge of posting, since it can get confusing otherwise. You should be very careful in considering who knows the password to the account – there have been many instances when someone who left a union or other organization on bad terms managed the Facebook page, and refused to give up control. You can imagine how this could end badly.

Go to [www.bitly.com/pageroles](http://www.bitly.com/pageroles) – all lowercase letters – to learn about the different levels.

## HOUSEKEEPING

Once you've created your page, you might notice that the URL of your page has a long string of numbers at the end, while other pages have a simple URL – [www.facebook.com/IATSE](http://www.facebook.com/IATSE) or [www.facebook.com/AFLCIO](http://www.facebook.com/AFLCIO), for example.

You should change your URL to make it easy to remember. Telling someone “Visit us on Facebook! Go to facebook.com/IATSE” is much easier than reciting a long URL that isn't intuitive.

To change the address, you'll need at least 25 fans. This is just Facebook's way of making sure you aren't spam. Getting 25 fans is easy, just tell your friends or family to give the page a “like” and you'll have 25 fans in no time.

Once you have 25 fans, click the “About” button on your page. Select “Facebook Web Address” under “Page Info” and type in a shorter URL – of course, www.facebook.com will still be in the URL, but the part after the backslash is what you can customize. Keep it simple!

## HOUSEKEEPING

You can also change the name of your page. You likely won't have to do this, but it's helpful to know about.

For example, in 2014, a labor dispute at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York resulted in a 4-month campaign called Save the Met Opera, led by six IATSE locals. We helped create a Facebook page for the campaign, and an enthusiastic, engaged community of opera fans and labor supporters emerged. Once the campaign was finished, we wanted to keep the Facebook page going since it was a great community – so we changed the name of the page to “We Saved the Met Opera” to avoid confusion.

If you want to change the name of your page, go to “About” and select “Name.” Change it, then click “Save Changes.”



## CREATING GROUND RULES

One aspect of creating a Facebook page that concerns many people is the possibility that others will write inflammatory comments on the page – on the Internet, people who leave offensive, inflammatory comments are known as “trolls.” Creating a clear comment policy may help deter these kinds of comments and by giving you clear authority to delete the comments and ban the commenter.

The “About” tab on a Facebook page lists relevant information about the page subject – website, location, description, and so on. It’s also where you should post your comment policy. You can see our comment policy here. Check out other union Facebook pages, such as the AFL-CIO, and look at their comment policies – you can pull language from other policies, use ours, or come up with your own.

On the IATSE’s Facebook page, we explicitly state that we reserve the right to remove content that is inflammatory, threatening, obscene, and so on. This gives us leeway to assess comments and make decisions – should we delete the comment, hide it, or ban the offender?

Something you should keep in mind is that healthy debate on a Facebook page is fine, if it is directly related to content that you’ve posted. A friendly debate between two people commenting on a minimum wage article is fine, and allowing this to happen will help create a healthy community. Just because someone disagrees does not necessarily mean they are a troll.

Use good judgment about allowing dissenting comments – if you delete someone who politely disagrees with you, you could be accused of censoring people, and that doesn’t help create community.

If you do see comments you’d like to remove, remember that you have the option of either deleting them or hiding them. Page administrators, editors, and moderators have the authority to do this; the other page two roles, advertisers and analysts, cannot.

Deleting a comment means just that – it’s permanently gone. Hiding a comment means that the person who left the comment, plus the people they are friends with on Facebook, can still see the comment. However, no one else can see it.

When you delete a comment, the person who left it will see that you’ve deleted it, and they may get upset and leave another one. If this happens repeatedly, feel free to ban them.

Hiding a comment is a safer bet. They will not know that their comment has been hidden, and thus are less likely to get agitated and make accusations of censorship.

Finally, if a comment is threatening, you have the option of reporting it to Facebook. We have never had to do this.

To delete or hide a comment, or to ban a user, hover your mouse over the comment and click the “X” that shows up on the right-hand side of the little box. You’re shown a few options: “Hide”, “Delete”, “Report”, or “Ban so-and-so.” Chose one, and you’re set.



## PROFANITY FILTERS

Facebook has two features that you can use to screen out certain content – a comment blocker and profanity filter.

Go to your “Settings” tab and select “General” then scroll down to “Page Moderation” and “Profanity Filter.” For the first option, simply enter words that you don’t want showing up on your page – like curse words and other obscenities – and hit “Save Changes.” This prevents someone from using that word in a comment or post on your page. You can also select the filter level you’d like – a similar feature that also screens out profane content before it can get published.

Save your changes, and rest easy knowing that it’s one less thing you need to worry about!

## WHAT TO POST

Once you’ve thought through a comment policy, you can start thinking about what you’ll be posting on your page.

It’s important to remember that not everything you post will show up in the newsfeed of every person who has liked your page. Facebook shows your content to about 10-15% of your audience.

Facebook does, however, show video to a larger portion of your audience, so go ahead and post great videos that you see.

You can post memes that you’ve seen or created – a meme is, by definition, “an idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture” – so on the internet, it’s usually a picture, copied over and over and spread across the internet. The picture here is a meme – if you use Facebook, you’ve probably seen a similar image of a person drawn in black and white, over a pastel-colored background with a quote, and the “someecards” logo at the bottom. Memes within the labor community have a worker-friendly message like this.

If your local has a barbecue or supports a rally, consider snapping a few photos to post on Facebook to show what you’re up to. Make sure the photos are appropriate, and that they’re in-focus and centered.

You can post worker-related news, locally or globally, and progressive wins, like when a state announces a minimum wage hike. It’s great to help others celebrate and keep your fans informed.

Finally, many lists of union-made products are available online, especially around holidays. Those are fun to share, and make it easy for others to shop union! Check out Facebook pages like Labor 411 and Union Plus for lists like this.

## IS IT INTERESTING?

Before you post something on Facebook, ask yourself, “Would I share this if I saw it?” Post things people want to share! Inspirational quotes and “agitational” text – or union-centric political cartoons



like the one on this slide – are always great option. If you are writing accompanying text to a photo, article, or video, make sure you keep it short and clear. People scroll through their newsfeeds and won't spend much time reading a long post.

## **EXPERIMENT WITH CONTENT**

Experiment, text, and have fun! We try out a range of content on the IATSE's Facebook page and find that posts relating to IATSE members' organizing or negotiating campaigns always gets attention. That's not surprising – people love seeing what their sisters and brothers are accomplishing.

By using insights and tracking – which we will go over at the end of the presentation – you can figure out what kind of content works and make your job easier.

## **SUCCESSFUL CONTENT**

Here are examples of content we've posted that performed well – meaning that they were shared, commented on, and liked.

Union-made lists are popular, and Labor 411, Union Plus, and the AFL-CIO make many of them especially around holidays or events like the Super Bowl. Find Labor 411, Union Plus, and the AFL on Facebook and check out their pages around holidays.

The President Obama quote came during his 2015 State of the Union address, and it's one of the few times the president directly addressed labor unions in a national speech. AFSCME made this meme and we shared it that evening.

The bottom-right-hand meme shows "Backstage Badger" – and advice animal meme that started in the theatre community online – with some words of wisdom about showing up on time. We shared this for fun on Daylight Savings and people loved it. It's kind of an online inside-joke – a good way to create community.

## **SUCCESSFUL CONTENT (CONTINUED)**

More examples of successful content. The Leaning Tower of Pisa cartoon is a funny picture that also speaks to the quality work that union members perform.

The protest picture was sent in by a Local 251 member in February 2015 and is a great example of union activism, one of the IATSE's four pillars of success. IATSE sisters and brothers on Facebook always share these types of pictures widely, and we love posting them.

The old-school throwback picture on the top right was posted on a "Throwback Thursday" – a fun theme on many social media platforms that encourage people to share old "throwback" content. This particular picture is from our archives, and was a huge hit – our followers made up funny captions, reminisced about old equipment, and shared it with their friends.



Finally, the WalMart strike meme was part of a series of memes created by Working America to support striking WalMart employees in 2014. We shared it to show our support online, and many IATSE members attended strike rallies – it’s just one more way of showing solidarity.

## **BE RELEVANT**

Make sure you’re paying attention to the news cycle and holidays, as they can provide fodder for great content. For example, when Saturday Night Live aired its special 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary episode on 2015, the Wayne’s World sketch included an “SNL Top Ten” list and placed “the crew” as the number one best thing about SNL. Many IATSE members work on Saturday night live, and this was a really exciting and proud moment of recognition. We found a screen shot and shared the image and it did very well.

Public works unions like AFSCME will often share an image like this during snowstorms, reminding everyone that union labor is everywhere. We’ll share it to show support for union labor.

Finally, around Christmas we’ll usually share a picture of the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center because IATSE members in New York help put it up and decorate.

## **USE YOUR JUDGMENT**

It’s important to use your judgment, though! We saw this image on Facebook and at first glance it seems to be good content – it’s a meme, it’s entertainment-related, it’s supposed to be a joke. We didn’t end up sharing it because it’s also sexist, implying that there are no female stagehands. If we shared this, it would alienate many, many sisters.

Use your judgment when it comes to posting content – you don’t want to create a community that isn’t open to everyone.

## **FINDING CONTENT**

When you first make your page, finding things to post might seem overwhelming – but don’t think that you have to come up with all original content!

One of the first things you should do is “Like” other Facebook pages. That way, their updates will show up in your news feed. We share other page’s content all the time – take a look at our Facebook for examples. Liking other unions, IATSE locals, labor-affiliated organizations, allies, and activism-related pages will give you excellent content all the time. Just go to the search bar on Facebook and start typing “IATSE” and locals pages should start popping up on the drop-down menu.

If you see something you want to share, you have a few options in terms of giving credit to the page you found it on. You can tag the page in your post by typing the @ symbol and then typing the name of the page – it should pop up, and then they’ll get the notification that you shared it. You can share



directly from the page itself, and their name will automatically show up when you share it. Or you can write “via”, “Courtesy of” and so on.

## WHEN TO POST

You should post regularly – three to five times a week, one or two times a day at most. If you post too often, you could end up spamming your fans and they might choose to unfollow you.

Think about when your fans might have downtime, when they’re most likely to go online and check Facebook – you can also check when they’re online and most active by using the insights feature. We will go over that soon.

You can schedule posts for the weekends – when many people have days off – and remember to schedule posts for holidays too.

## SCHEDULING POSTS

As mentioned, Facebook allows you to schedule posts for your page. This saves you a ton of time and means you don’t have to go on Facebook on holidays and time off just to keep up your page.

Once you’ve scheduled a post, you can edit the time or text in case you made a mistake.

## EDITING POSTS

It is important to know that once you’ve hit “Post” and published content on to your timeline, you can edit the text if you notice an error. Click the chevron in the upper-right corner of the post and select “Edit Post.” Make the changes, and click save.

You also have the options of hiding the post or deleting it. Hiding means it won’t show up on the timeline but it is still there. Deleting it gets rid of the post forever. Remember that even though you’ve deleted something, people may still have seen it – and if it’s something inappropriate, they may have even taken a screenshot.

Be careful about everything you post, and make sure you can’t get in trouble for it.

## INSIGHTS & TRACKING

Getting to know the insights and tracking feature of Facebook will save you time and make your work on Facebook much more efficient. Facebook collects a ton of data about its users and you can use that to your advantage.

This might look really complex and confusing, but once you’ve spent time exploring it, everything will make more sense. Facebook has an excellent “Help” section that clearly explains the meaning and function of every term under the insights tab. Find this resource at [www.facebook.com/help](http://www.facebook.com/help).



Under insights, you can see who is engaging with your page, how well posts are performing, and when your fans are online.

Facebook provides demographics for your fans – where they're located, gender, age, and any other information that users voluntarily give when they sign up for Facebook. Some of this information, like age and gender, might not be particularly useful for you since it's mostly used for ad targeting.

However, you can see WHEN your fans are online, broken down by day of the week – and that is helpful for determining best days and times to post! Our fans tend to be online in the evening more, and we schedule posts for then so they are more likely to reach more people.

Tracking post performance is another measurement that will save you time – if you find that images do really well on your page, try sharing them more often. You can even figure out what type of images do better – cartoons? Photos? Memes? This will all help you determine the best content to post.

If you want more resources to using insights and tracking, check Facebook's help page first – [www.facebook.com/help](http://www.facebook.com/help). The internet is full of resources – just search “Facebook insights” on a search engine and check out the options.

## CONCLUSION

This brings us to the end of the advanced Facebook training. Special thanks to Karen Hickey, Wisconsin AFL-CIO Communications Director, who inspired this with her “Best Practices for Running a Facebook Page” presentation. Thank you for listening, and please drop us a line if you have any feedback – [comms@iatse.net](mailto:comms@iatse.net).

