Guide to navigating Facebook
PERSONAL PROFILE VERSUS FAN PAGE
#digithoole
It’s no secret. Facebook is a key ingredient when marketing yourself as a real estate agent.

But maintaining both a personal profile and a Facebook fan page can be a difficult juggling act.

So, how do you make best use of Facebook to successfully build an online reputation and digitalised personal brand?
Facebook and real estate agents
a match made in heaven

Facebook is of course the world’s most popular social network, and it is particularly advantageous for real estate agents as it’s the perfect way to connect and engage with your local community.

Facebook can help you reach people in your neighborhood – whom you don’t yet know – and allows you to create a compelling personal brand that will showcase who you are and what you can offer as a real estate agent.

BUT THE BIG QUESTIONS ARE STILL SEEMINGLY UNANSWERED

• Should I use my personal Facebook profile for business or set up a separate alias?
• How do I leverage a Facebook business fan page?
• Will I still need a personal account?
Facebook profile versus Facebook business fan page
a branding conundrum

Facebook profiles and Facebook fan pages have distinct uses and as such have specific advantages and pitfalls. Their differences concern issues such as organic and paid reach, advertising and engagement.

The truth is: a personal Facebook profile and a business Facebook fan page have two distinctly different sets of benefits.
Why you need a Facebook personal profile

• Your personal profile account allows you to make direct friend requests to people you’d like to connect with online, making it super easy to build up your friends and followers, be it with people you already know or as you meet new people, day-in, day-out.

• You can also use your Facebook profile to post and contribute in Facebook community groups and on other people’s posts, while a fan page doesn’t allow you to do this.

• Facebook algorithms are also designed to show up posts from a personal profile far more often that a fan page, so it achieves a much better organic [natural] reach, meaning your posts show up in the Facebook feed of your personal connections.
Here’s how a Facebook fan page comes into play

• A fan page allows you to reach people you don’t yet know, by running ads and boosting posts. It’s a great way to prospect for new business beyond your existing network. You can reach people geographically or through their interests or past online behaviour, thanks to other pages they have liked, or posts they have reacted to in the past.

• To become a fan or follower of your page, a person only needs to click “like”, which might be less daunting than having to accept a friend request.

• A fan page also lets you schedule posts in advance, helping you pre-plan your social media activity and reduce the time needed to constantly post updates and stay front-of-mind.

• A fan page provides insightful analytics as to who engaged with your posts or how many people a post reached, so you can plan future posts based on what resonated most with your audience, in the past.
Is mixing business with pleasure a good or bad idea?

Based on how avid a Facebook user you are in the first place, and how private you like to keep your personal life versus your ‘agent life’, you should consider the following account options:

**Are you Persona A?**

I’m happy to let my clients and prospects engage with the real me.

If, for you, there’s no problem mixing business with pleasure, you can use your existing Facebook account with your family, close friends, acquaintances, clients and prospects alike.

Facebook still offers two features to help you manage who sees your private posts verses your public posts.

1 - **Your post options** – simply choose your audience each time you share an update.

2 - **The lists feature** – you have the added advantage of being able to group your contacts into lists, so you could separate family and close friends so that they’re the only connections that see your more intimate and private posts.
Or...

Are you Persona B?
I’d like to keep my existing Facebook account ‘private’ for family and close friends alone.

If, on the other hand, you feel that neither the twain should meet – and you want to create a clear divide between close friends and your real estate contacts – then you could set up a new personal profile, for the sole purpose of be’friend’ing people that live within your local community.

In this instance, it’s advisable to completely hide your original Facebook account so that it’s not easily found in a Facebook search. Lock down your privacy to the point that Friends will have to know your personal email address in order to find you.

The fail safe could be to use an alternative name, such as a nickname, or for married females you could revert back to your maiden name.

Then set up a separate ‘agent alias’ to connect with clients or prospects. What I am referring to here is a regular Facebook personal profile, that will be used for the sole purpose of connecting to people as a real estate agent.

It’s important to note, however, that creating a separate ‘agent alias’ using a personal profile isn’t actually abiding by Facebook’s rules, but if you already have a large number of friends and associates from outside the area, segregating them using lists within your personal Facebook profile can become impossible. Also, Facebook have now given us the ability to switch between profiles, so that’s an indication in my book that they accept that people have a need for different profiles.
When brand ‘you’ hits the big time — set up a Facebook fan page

When you are ready to actively start promoting your real estate brand with paid advertising, that’s the point in time in which to set up a Facebook fan page. Remember, it’s the fan page that helps you reach people you don’t already know across your local community.

Ideally, you also need to have a social media marketing strategy in place and a dedicated marketing budget for running ads.

Current trends are to either use your own personal brand name or for agents operating in teams to give yourself a group name, for example as Team McPherson have done or use the suburb name in which you operate like Ben Munro-Smith, who uses the search term Balmain Agent.

Bear in mind that you can have a fan page without a personal account, but only if someone else sets it up for you or you use an agency such as Hoole.co to create it on your behalf. People are certainly less likely to get confused as to which account to click on when searching for you, but you will have lost the ability to befriend your contacts — that all important feature that comes with a personal account, as previously explained.
Will the real [insert your name here] please stand up?

Be mindful that if you set up two Facebook accounts to build your brand — and they both use your name (personal profile or fan page) — when someone searches for you they will see both accounts. This is not ideal, as it poses the problem of which page you want them to engage with. So make sure you use a clear naming convention for both, or share the same content across both of your accounts.

Below are examples that demonstrate how your profile image, a logo, the profile or page name and the about information you include show up in Facebook’s search results.

*My personal profile:*

[Profile Image]

Mel Hoole
Sydney, Australia · 27 mutual friends

*My business profiles:*

[Profile Image]

Melanie Hoole - Hoole.co
135 Pentecost Avenue, Sydney, Australia 2074 · Digital/online marketing agency · 553 like t...

[Profile Image]

Melanie Hoole
Founder at Melanie Hoole - Hoole.co · Marize Bellomo and 26 other mutual friends · Also a ...

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*Mark and Emilee work together as Team McPherson and promote a jointly managed business page:*

[Profile Image]

Mark McPherson
Self-Employed · Friend since December

[Profile Image]

Emilee Tayyara
McGrath Estate Agents · 31 mutual friends

[Profile Image]

Team McPherson Real Estate
270 Clovelly Road, Coogee, New South Wales, Australia 2034 · Estate agent · 668 like this...
3 important Facebook naming tips

1. On your personal profile – only includes your name - but you should also fill in your about details with your place of work and job title. You can also include an intro to describe who you are. If you are licensed I recommend including this fact.

2. On your business fan page – you can include the real estate brand name, under which you work because that’s easily changeable, without breaking any future web links.

3. Set up a personalised (vanity) URL – for both your personal profile and business fan page.
   a) Only use your name in your personal vanity url, or if that’s already taken, add the term RealEstateAgent to the end.
   b) Include the term real estate in your business fan page url. Do not put the brand you work for in the url because you’ll need to change your url again if you move agencies, which will break any links pointing to your page from other places across the web.
3 ways to turn ‘friends’ into ‘fans’

Here’s a great strategy for encouraging the people you already know in the real world to follow you in the digital world:

1. **First, focus on growing your personal profile** – connect to everyone you already know using the ‘invite’ friend option in your personal account.

2. **Invite your friends across to your fan page** – using the ‘invite friends to like your page’ option (found on your fan page). This is a great strategy for building your fan page following, because this gives you the ability to grow your fan page ‘likes’ a lot faster than relying on the posting and advertising ‘boost’ feature alone.

3. **Import contacts from your CRM database** – it’s important to note that you can only import contacts to your personal account and there is a maximum of 5000 friends you can connect with from any single personal profile.
**Don’t miss a trick**

Having a separate ‘agent alias’, with its own news stream and notifications, means you are less likely to miss an opportunity to respond to those all important connections from your potential seller network.

Use the ‘star’ option to mark people you are actively pursuing as ‘close contacts’ and Facebook will ensure you see their posts and updates in your feed.

**Consider your capacity to commit**

There’s no point setting up multiple Facebook accounts if you don’t have time to keep them active. So, consider how much time you’ll have available to keep on top of your social media activity.

For instance, if you don’t have a plan or a budget for using Facebook advertising, you can probably just stick to building your own Facebook profile for now.

**Being on hand to answer community questions**

Be aware that a fan page doesn’t allow you to comment on local community group pages, where you are often afforded opportunities to provide local real estate advice.

Become an active member of these groups and monitor real estate questions from locals in your area and respond to them using your ‘agent alias’ profile.

**Get it right from the start!**

Building your personal brand on Facebook can be challenging, but it’s a crucial component of your personal marketing. Get the Hoole.co team to get you set up in the right way from the start. And follow our ongoing updates via the #digithoole blog for tips on how to make the most of these accounts once launched.
Facebook, like many other social media channels, is constantly evolving so come back and visit us regularly for more real estate marketing tips.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This guide contains general information only. The information in this guide is no substitute for professional advice. We encourage you to seek professional advice before making any business decisions. You should consult a suitably qualified professional, marketing, or brand adviser. We would obviously love the opportunity to have that conversation with you, and you can reach us as follows:

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