

Learning to take advantage of the No. 1 Web site among seniors can be a huge sales advantage.

## Facebook: network with seniors

What's the one place nearly every high school senior goes daily? Online, to Facebook.com. This center of mass communication has more than 36 million members. It's the No. 1 social network for the modern high school student.

Facebook users post profiles of themselves containing such information as their age, e-mail address and interests. They post photos and videos of themselves for e-friends the world over to view.

**A business profile on Facebook allows you to have a business identity and communicate with potential clients. Establish a personal profile, too, to maximize your social networking.**

Your studio can use the networking power of Facebook to make students aware of your business and help spread the word about your services for seniors. There are three main ways for professional photographers to take advantage of the site: targeted advertising, social networking and online promotions.

**TARGETED ADVERTISING.** When you create a Facebook ad, you are prompted to select several criteria to determine who will see it. You can select the age range and geographic region, so, for example, you'd choose 16 to 18-year-olds living in the town nearest to you, thus designating your target group. When a viewer clicks on the ad, he or she will be sent to your page in Facebook or directly to your company's Web site, whichever option you choose.

You can also create a daily budget for your customized ad, choosing pay-per-click—you pay every time someone clicks on your ad—or pay-per-impression, meaning you pay each time the ad appears on Facebook. Facebook gives you the means to analyze the success of your ad by providing statistics on who is interacting with your ad and how often.

**SOCIAL NETWORKING.** Social networking is the most useful and important aspect of Facebook. Facebook has two main kinds of free profiles: business and personal. For a business, it's advisable to set up both profiles to reach the largest network possible.

The business profile you create is your Facebook business identity. You can upload photos and videos, post events and contact information, open discussion topics, and

more. It's a great vehicle for communicating with potential clients and offering them incentives. Include lots of images and useful information that will encourage viewers to send their friends to your page. You can make the page as informal or formal as you'd like.

When a Facebook user adds you to his social network, he becomes a "fan" of your business. This connection will be displayed on the person's profile for a few days, so anyone visiting his profile will see it, and will likely visit your page. Curiosity and networking are key in creating awareness of your company. Encourage any of your friends, family, coworkers or their children to become a fan of your business on Facebook.

The Facebook design does not allow for sending messages from your business site or inviting others to become a fan. Other users can recommend your site to their friends, but a business cannot pursue viewers through any means but ads. That's where your personal site comes in. Through your personal site you can seek potential clients based on a region or particular network (such as a school's) using the search tool, and then recommend viewers become fans of your site. Be sure to make an intriguing offer of some kind in your message.

Once you build your network, gain fans and add content to your page, there are many other ways to use Facebook. You can confirm portrait sessions through messages or by posting on the client's profile page, instigate relevant discussion topics to encourage repeat viewing, and send important updates and news to fans.

As with Facebook advertisements, you can see how many people visit your page every day, how they heard about your site (an ad, a message on their friend's profile, etc.), and how they interact with your page.



All of this is useful information in analyzing the effectiveness of your Facebook presence.

**ONLINE PROMOTIONS.** Facebook is a means of giving incentives to your potential clients. By offering promotions, you can not only encourage clients to book a portrait session with you, but also encourage them to increase your brand awareness by spreading you to their social networks—online word of mouth. Through your business profile page you can send mass updated messages to your fans to make them aware of new promotions or opportunities.

You might want to offer promotions related to online activities. You can offer incentives for students to become fans of your business, book with a friend, book before a certain date and more. In addition to traditional incentives such as waiving the

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sitting fee, you can offer free Web-resolution Facebook photos to potential clients and tag the photo with their name when you post it. A notice appears on the client's page when they have been tagged in a photo, with a link to the location. This has multiple benefits. It rewards your clients, gets your work out there for others to see, and encourages more students to visit your page. ■

*To get started, go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), then click Advertising at the bottom of the page. It will walk you through setting up a business profile and creating an advertising campaign.*

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