Using Facebook to Boost Your Recruitment Numbers

YouthBuild programs across the country are finding creative ways to use social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter to help advance all aspects of their programming - from community building to job placement to post-program follow-up.

YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School has successfully leveraged Facebook in its recruitment efforts by taking advantage of the many options the social networking site offers. In this tip sheet created for YouthBuild sites participating in the MDRC random assignment evaluation, we highlight two of those options and provide you with a step-by-step guide so you can get started on your own social media recruitment strategy.

Facebook Pages

- YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School **maintains several Facebook pages** to connect with a broad range of stakeholders – the general public, current YouthBuild students and staff, YouthBuild alumni and prospective YouthBuild participants.

- In addition to a general YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School page, each 'class' has its own dedicated Facebook page, and the site recently launched **a Facebook page focused exclusively on recruitment** where application and orientation information is posted, as well as videos highlighting the program and current classes of young people

- According to Laura Hahn at YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School, Facebook serves as **a virtual 'spider web'** allowing current students who 'like' the recruitment page to spread the word about YouthBuild to their friends and friends of their friends through updates, photos, and videos posted to the page.

- During recruitment season, flyers posted throughout the organization encourage current YouthBuild students to "like" the recruitment page in order to expand the recruitment web to a wider audience of their peers

Facebook Ads

- YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School also takes advantage of **Facebook's online advertising** in order to promote the program to a broader network of young people

- Facebook ads are **easy to create** and are a cost-effective means of reaching your target audience becase they leverage Facebook's knowledge of its users

- For example, if your program wants to target recruitment of young women between the ages of 16 and 18 in a certain ZIP code, **Facebook allows you to tailor your ad reach** to that audience in just a few clicks

- And by linking directly to your recruitment page on your organization's web site, you can drive more traffic to your application materials and information on your orientation sessions

Step-by-step instructions on how to create a Facebook page and Facebook ads are included below

One caveat: Facebook changes as often as the weather. So please take these instructions as a snapshot in time and a general guide to building up your recruitment presence on Facebook

Special thanks to Laura Hahn and Eva Lexie from YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School for sharing their recruitment strategies with YouthBuild USA

How to Set Up Your Facebook Page

Facebook 101: For the social media shy…

If you currently don't have a Facebook page for your organization or for your recruitment efforts, this step-by-step guide offers a brief introduction to demystify the process. Reading about social media is a helpful start, but the best way to get comfortable with Facebook is to go online and learn by doing. So take this as a starting point and get clicking!

1) **Register for a Facebook account**
   To create a page or buy ads, you first have to sign up for a Facebook account at www.facebook.com. If you already have a personal account, you can use that to create your organization's page. However, you may want to establish a separate 'professional' account. The decision should be based on your organization's social media policy and your personal preference. There are trade-offs to using either option. When you maintain two separate accounts, the power of your own network becomes diluted. However, when you link your personal account to that of your workplace, you have to consider how your personal posts interact with the professional

2) **Choose a Classification and Fill in Your Program's Name**
   Facebook provides six different classifications for creating a page, one of which is "Company, organization or institution". A YouthBuild program falls into this category. This classification will help you rank in more relevant searches and provide relevant information fields on your page. After selecting "organization" as your category, fill out your program's name. Keep in mind that your category and name cannot be changed once your page is created.

3) **Complete Basic Information and Fill the Page**
   Upload a photo or your program logo to stand as the main visual representation for your YouthBuild program's page. Facebook will then ask you to invite your friends. You will next be prompted to fill in your basic information. Add your website URL and a brief overview of your organization in the 'About' section. Click "Edit Info," and add information you deem pertinent for your organization. Be sure to add an email address, and spend time adding pictures/videos to the photos tab.

4) **Take Advantage of Features**
   Take advantage of the various features Facebook pages have to offer. Clicking on the "Get Started" button under your default image displays multiple steps you can take to make the most of your page. Here are some worth trying: invite your friends, tell your fans, post status updates, and promote this page on your website.

5) **Play and Track**
   At this point, you have built and shared a Facebook page that represents your YouthBuild program. To measure how all these efforts are going along the way, click the "View Insights" tab on the right-hand side of your Facebook page. This will allow you to see how many people have become fans of your page, or in Facebook terms, "liked" your page. You can change the time frame to compare how many likes you received on one day versus another. For additional tracking information, you can also check out the insights tool.

For a five-minute tutorial video on how to set up a Facebook page for your organization click on the link here:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoqxA95KC0c&feature=player_embedded

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Things to keep in mind when setting up your page:

- Add engaging content, platform apps, and opportunities for interaction
- Make sure to become a fan of your own page, and ask your employees, friends, and acquaintances to do the same
- At least once a week, refresh content with new surveys, contests, videos, photos, articles, and announcements
- Consider different pages for different audiences

How to Buy Ads on Facebook

Facebook has made it easy for your YouthBuild program to create ads targeting young people in your recruitment area. As is true for all awareness-raising efforts, Facebook ads are just one tactic to add to your arsenal. No single outreach effort is a silver bullet, but incorporating Facebook ads into your overall recruitment strategy is one more way to reach more young people from within your target population.

Before you even think about logging on to Facebook:

- **Know your goals**: What is your organization hoping to achieve? More "likes" of your recruitment page on Facebook? More applications coming in from young people in your community? More applications from a specific target population? These objectives will shape your ad language and the image you use to attract visitors to your ad. They will also help you measure the success of your first foray into Facebook ads and decide whether they should be part of your outreach and recruitment strategy moving forward.

- **Know your budget**: Facebook ads are not expensive. Depending on the scope of your audience and reach of your ads, however, costs can add up, Have a budget in mind before you log on. Facebook prices ads either at on a cost per click basis (CPC) or cost "per thousand impressions" (CPM) basis. In our example below, the CPC totaled $0.90.

- **Know your image**: Choose a clear and attention-grabbing image to include in your ad. Facebook pages are crowded with photos and images, and your ad will be competing for attention among all of them. The image you choose should be square (180 pixels by 180 pixels, for example), and because it's so small, you should be sure that it's clear and easy to identify.

- **Know your copy**: You have a total of 120 characters to get users' attention – less than a tweet! – so make sure your message is to the point and tailored to your audience.

OK, I've done all of the above. Can I get on Facebook now?

Yes! Once you and your team have given some thought to the above, log on to Facebook and go to http://www.facebook.com/ads/manage/adscreator. Facebook will lead you through a **three-step ad creation process**:

1) **Create Your Ad (see Figure 1 below):**

   - First, choose where you want ad clicks to land. The more specific the better! Don't make Facebook users search around your web site to find your application materials or orientation information. If you have a page dedicated to recruitment, link directly to that page.

   - Then, enter your text and upload your image into the fields.

   - Finally, preview how your ad will look in the upper right hand corner of the page.

2) **Choose Your Target Audience (see Figure 2 below):**

   - Here's where you can take advantage of Facebook's reach and knowledge of its users.

   - First, choose the geographic area from which you're recruiting your young people. You can select this by ZIP code or city and choose a radius that best fits your target recruitment area.

   - Then, zero in on the population of young people your program serves. Choose the age range, gender, even the interests of the specific target population you're interested in recruiting.

   - As you narrow down the search criteria, you'll see how the audience numbers on the upper right-hand corner of the page decrease to reflect your target population.

Figure 1: Creating Your Ad

Figure 2: Choosing Your Target Audience

3) Determine Your Campaign Schedule and Budget (see Figure 3 below):

- As you narrow down your target population in step 2 above, you will see the cost per click (CPC) decrease. CPC rates depend on a variety of factors including the time of year you place the ad, how competitive the marketplace for ads in your area is, the target audience of your ads, and how other advertisers are targeting those same people.

- Whether you choose to pay by cost per click (CPC) or cost per thousand impressions (CPM), you can set your daily budget here. If you have a total of $300 to spend over the course of a month of recruitment, you can allocate $10 per day as the maximum amount you want to pay.

- Finally, review your ad, submit your payment information and start recruiting!

Figure 3: Determining Your Schedule and Budget

More detailed information on how to build your page and create ads on Facebook is available online at:

http://www.facebook.com/advertising