

A GUIDE TO TIMELINE CONTESTS on **FACEBOOK**

Learn how to run a successful "Like" or "Comment" to Win contest



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INTRODUCTION:

Facebook for Business:

With over 1.15 billion users, Facebook is the world's largest community center!

It offers businesses a valuable opportunity to connect with and be seen by their ideal potential customers. As compared to "pull" marketing where the goal is "pull someone to your website," Facebook offers ability for "intersection marketing" where a brand can connect and "intersect" with their ideal audience where the audience is spending time.....**the News Feed.**

Facebook users are spending an average of 20 minutes per Facebook visit. Within that time, the News Feed is the majority location where users spend time. This time is spent scanning posts from their friends, family, and companies they have "Liked".

This means your company has an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is to connect with users where they are spending significant time. The challenge is that you are competing with their friends and family.

Contests in the News Feed are one way companies can catch the eye of Facebook users and intersect with them.

Source: Facebook

**Average time spent
per Facebook visit is
20 minutes.**

(Source: Infodocket)



Facebook Promotion Policy Update:

Facebook made a significant change to their promotion policy in late August of 2013, that opened the door for Pages to legally run certain types of contests in the News Feed. Previously contest and promotion posts on a Facebook Page Timeline were not allowed. Now, Pages can run contests on both the News Feed and also on Tabs using apps. Using Tabs was the only method allowed prior to the change.

With this change comes questions and possibilities! What can be done? How? Are tabs still needed?

Focus of this Ebook:

This ebook is a guide **to the new possibilities for Timeline contests and promotions**. It is behind a introductory 101 level as it assumes you have a Facebook page that you are already actively using.

Included will be an overview, examples of types of Timeline contests that can be run, example posts types, and the advantages and disadvantages of Timeline contests in the News Feed versus contest on Tabs.

Let's dive in!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael A. Gangel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.



A GUIDE TO TIMELINE CONTESTS in THE FACEBOOK NEWS FEED

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Overview of Facebook Timeline Contests

With the change in Facebook promotion policy, new opportunities for Pages on Facebook are available, enabling companies to engage, interact with, and reach their ideal audience.

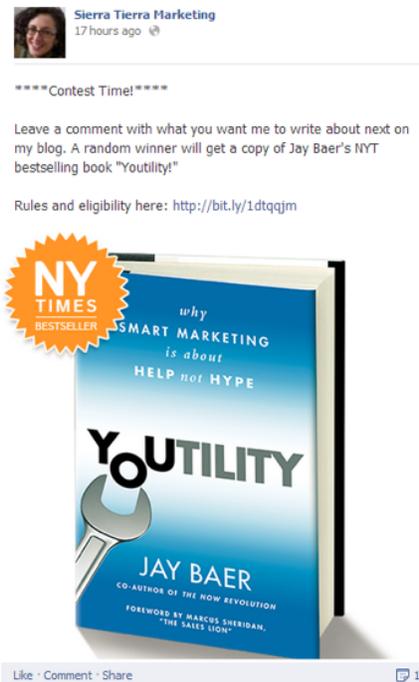
Page Admins now simply need to create a post on their page and push it out to run a contest!

(Well, a few more items are needed but we'll get to that.)

The basic entry options now allowed by Facebook for a Timeline Contest include entering by:

- Liking the post
- Leaving a comment on the post
- Posting a photo comment on the post
- Some combination of the above such as "Liking" for one entry and "commenting for an additional entry"

This means that for no cost, a Facebook Page can create a post and have fans and visitors engage with that post with as simple of a requirement as "Liking" the post to be entered!



Next up, the Facebook Promotion guidelines you must include.....



The Facebook Promotion Requirements

The following items must be included and addressed to comply with the Facebook promotion policy:

- You must include the Official Rules
- Include terms and eligibility requirements (country, age restrictions, etc.)
- Comply with applicable rules and regulations governing the promotion and all prizes offered
- You must include a complete release of Facebook by each entrant
- You must acknowledge that the promotion is in no way sponsored, endorsed, or administered by, or associated with, Facebook.

So, basically, within the post itself or via a link in the post you must include the above requirements.

Summary of what is allowed and what is not allowed:

- Collect entries by having users post on the Page or comment/like a Page post
- Collect entries by having users message the Page
- Utilize likes as a voting mechanism
- Businesses cannot administer promotions on personal Timelines.
- Pages cannot tag or encourage people to tag themselves in content that they are not actually depicted in.
- It's OK to ask people to submit names of a new product in exchange for a chance to win a prize
- It's not OK to ask people tag themselves in pictures of a new product in exchange for a chance to win a prize

With that backdrop of the options available on ways users can enter, and the knowledge of how promotion policy disclaimers and rules must be included, let's now review some specific opportunities and examples!

Source: Facebook



5 Facebook Contest Types You Can Run on Your Timeline

1. Like to Win

If your business is looking to run a quick Facebook contest to reward fans, the "Like to Win" giveaway is a simple way for fans to participate.

As the name suggest, fans only need to Like a certain post to enter the contest & stand a chance of winning. Photos, status posts, links & videos can all be used to run this contest.

2. Comment to Enter

A closely related option to the "Like to Win", the difference here is that fans must "comment" to enter. To do this type of contest, the post must announce the details of the contest and instruct visitors to make a comment on the post to be entered. Tools like the TabSite Timeline Contest App let Pages download all the comments that were posted and generate a winner randomly from those entered.

A benefit of "comment contests" is that by having visitors comment, there is greater reach, meaning more people have potential to see information on the contest. Why? Because when a visitor comments, the comment can be posted to their profile stream and so the friends of that person have possibility to see the comment in their own News Feed and thus be made aware of the contest. This is a stronger way to extend reach than a simple "Like" offers.



3. Trivia

Yes, consider a quick and easy trivia question.

Your post would outline the question and possible answers. Entrants have to comment and answer correctly to have a chance to win. This brings in a bit of game fun to the contest.

4. Like and Comment

A combo option of #1 and #2 above is to run a timeline contest where the fan can like for one entry and comment for an additional entry, thus giving them two entries and a greater chance to win.

TabSite's Timeline winner tool allows for (a) keeping each entry separate or (b) merging them so the winner is someone who has Liked or Commented. Lots of options!



5. Photo Comment Contest

Another creative timeline contest option is to create a post and ask fans to enter by submitting a photo comment. Since Facebook allows photos as a comment, this works well! A Page could have fans load a fun image for the Page to (a) judge the winner, or (b) randomly pick a winner from submitted photos. Ideas could include to have a contest of photos submitted with fans using your product, or why they need your product, or some variation of these.

With these types of contests as a backdrop, let's switch now to specific post messages that can be modified and used to run your own customized Timeline Contest.

10 Timeline Contest Examples You Can Customize and Run Now!

Below are example posts that can be used or customized to help you run your first Timeline Contest! Note that you must include either your rules/disclaimer in your post as the example below does or include a link to it in your post.

Sweepstakes / Giveaway:

1. It's GIVEAWAY time! Click "LIKE" for your chance to win a \$20 iTunes Gift Card!

Winners will be randomly selected at 4 p.m. CST this Friday and their names will be posted on our Facebook Page!

Rules/Disclaimer: This promotion is open to those 18 and above in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia. Void where prohibited. By "Liking" you enter and agree that this promotion is in no way associated with, administered by, or endorsed by Facebook; and acknowledge a complete release of Facebook by your participation.

2. Comment to WIN! Comment below and complete with "Joe's Pizza has the best...." to enter.

1 winner will be randomly selected at 4 p.m. CST this Friday from all comments as winner of a FREE LARGE PIZZA. We'll post the winner on our Facebook Page!

3. Comment below for your chance to win a free T-Shirt: The best flavor of ice cream we offer is _____. Two entries will be randomly chosen and announced at 4pm EST tomorrow as winners!



4. Who is excited about our upcoming LIVE EVENT in 2 weeks? Like this for one entry to win a free ticket, and Comment on this post for a second entry! One winner will be chosen randomly from those entered and announced at 5 pm EST this Friday!

Trivia:

5. Answer correctly to win! What is the name of our newest product launched 2 weeks ago? Simply comment below for your chance to win a \$25 off code for use on our website! 1 Winner will be picked from correct entries and announced at 1 p.m. PST on Monday!
6. Answer correctly to win! In what month of 2010 was our company launched? (a) January (b) March, or (c) May? Comment below with your answer for the month of launch! 2 Winners will be picked from correct entries and announced at 1 p.m. PST on Monday!
7. We're launching a new menu item at our restaurant this weekend! Answer correctly to win a \$30 voucher for dinner. Winner announced here this Thursday at 3 p.m. EST Is the new menu item (a) fish (b) chicken (c) steak, or (d) turkey? Comment below!

Photo Contest:

8. Enter our Timeline Photo Contest! Enter a photo in the comment area below that shows us what makes you happy! Deadline to enter is this Friday at 11:59 p.m. EST! Our team of 3 judges will review all photos and announce a winner next Monday at 9 a.m. EST. Winner receives a \$50 Amazon.com Gift Card!
9. Post a comment with a Photo of you in one of our stores for a chance to win a 30% off 1 item coupon! Random winner will be selected and posted Friday at 4:30 p.m. EST
10. It's cold up north! Let's head to the beach! Post a photo comment below of your favorite activity at the beach. One person will be chosen randomly from those submitting pictures to win a \$150 voucher towards a stay at our AllStar Florida Beach Hotel! Winner announced this Friday at 4 p.m. EST

Again, these examples are starters to help you get creative and think about what might work for your company Facebook Page.

Feel free to use these or create your own variation!



Best Practice Tips for Timeline Contests

As I noted earlier, you need to have the rules, terms, and disclaimer either in the actual post content (such as down a few lines after the main introduction of the contest), or you need to include a link to a tab or web page that includes this information. So that part is a must, but let's look at key items for the post itself:

1. Create a clear and captivating Call to Action

Just like a email marketing headline, the first few words are important! They either capture the users eye or bounce them on.

Tell them clearly what they must do very early in the post such as, "Comment on this post to enter..." Think of a powerful snippet that clearly and concisely relays the information with energy! A call-to-action is simply that...a way to stimulate the viewer to take action by giving them a clear and concise instruction.

2. Use an Image!

By adding a photo as part of your Timeline post you greatly increase potential for engagement. Studies have shown that photos generate 53% more "Likes" than the average post. As well, images with a person grab the eye of viewers more.

Be sure the image is not "busy" with lots going on. A small amount of text can be helpful, such as "Contest" but be aware that if you want to use Facebook Ads on the post, the text in the image cannot be greater than 20% of the image.



3. Short Time Periods

A Timeline Contest is going to work best if the duration of the contest is short. Most posts get 80% of their views and interaction in the first 40 minutes after it is posted. So, you need to think in terms of hours or a few days. You can have the contest run 4-5 days if you post reminders with links to the post or use Facebook Ads, otherwise since a post is quite time limited in its visibility it is going to be best to think in terms of 1-2 days at max. Better yet would be a contest time length duration of 4-10 hours.



4. Relevant Prize

As with any contest or promotion you run, it is important to make the prize relevant to your company. Giving away a iPad Mini may garner lots of entries, but it will also bring in visitors that only have interest in the prize and have no interest in your company.

Since these promotions require little of the person entering, the prize value should also not be extreme. Giving away something your company offers in terms of a discount, coupon, or product that equates to \$20-\$50 in value can be a great offer.

Keep it in line with your business. By this I mean if you are a restaurant, it should be something connected to your menu. If you are a hotel, it can be something related such as a room discount or free tickets to a venue near your hotel in conjunction with an overnight stay.

For those providing services, it can be a limited session. It should always be something that connects them further to your company!



5. Promote the Post!

Since any given post on Facebook is only seen initially by 15-22% of viewers, it is important to think through a promotion strategy. One free way to increase the reach of your Timeline Contest is to get the embed code Facebook offers and embed the post on your website and blog.

Another free method is to get the unique post URL from Facebook and include this in social posts on Twitter, Google+, and other social networks.

As well, you can send out a email to your marketing list and include a announcement or the same image used in the post and link it to the post on Facebook.





Facebook Ads can also be a way to extend the reach of your contest promotion. This can help you reach non-fans. To do this, you can either use the simple "Boost Post" feature on the Page post itself that Facebook offers, or go to the Facebook Ads Manager and create a sponsored story on your contest post. With either method, be sure to narrow down the audience to your target demographic. Creating an Ad in the Ads Manager allows you to get more specific in who you target.

Keeping these best practices in mind can help you create a contest that captures interest and attention, extends the reach of your page, and provides positive buzz that ultimately helps more Facebook users be aware of your company and your company products or services.

COMPARING TIMELINE AND TAB CONTESTS

So with these new options for contests in the news feed, are tab contests still relevant and useful? If so, how do I decide which to run?

The key is understanding your goals for the contest. *Both types have value.* Timeline contests offer a simple and quick way to boost action and engagement on the Facebook page. Tab contests offer great design control and also better lead capture. So, your choice will depend upon your end goals.

Here's an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of each type.

Advantages of a Timeline Contest

- Quick and easy to setup, simply create a post!
- Fun way to engage fans & visitors
- Free to run
- Runs totally in News Feed where users spend the most time
- Offers way to increase your Reach and Engagement
- The more Reach and Engagement, the more potential to grow your community

Advantages of a Facebook Tab App Contest

- Ability to gather email addresses to identify lead and use for future marketing
- More design and branding control for the contest
- Can ensure Like Gate is in place so entrants/voters become fans of the page



- Contest has a "home" on Facebook so it is easy to share and link to for promoting
- Rules and Terms have simple way to be displayed, viewed, and accessed
- Great user experience of seeing all entries, voting, and sharing a entry you like
- Can be accessed on Facebook or also off of Facebook on a web page
- Can integrate other tools such as a Instagram Image contest

Disadvantages of a Timeline Contest

- Cannot collect email addresses
- Cannot have a Like Gate to ensure entrant Likes your Page
- The Page cannot re-share the post easily to tell people about the contest multiple times
- Need to post or link to full rules and the required release of Facebook's responsibility for the contest, which can be cumbersome to do in a post
- Without email address, it can be harder to notify the winner

Disadvantages of a Tab App Contest

- Requires entrants to click from a post to go to the tab
- Takes more time to setup, add graphics, and customize to deploy
- Typically is going to cost at least \$19-\$30+ dollars to run
- Pages must use a Smart URL to overcome Facebook mobile limitations

SUMMARY:

That 's the low down! Timeline contests can work great for short, fun ways to be social and increase interaction on your Facebook page. Tab Contests offer a greater way to control design, user experience, and should be used when lead capture is a primary goal.

So, if you want to get more folks in the door quickly, a timeline contest can help. If you want to grow your email list to market over time, then a tab contest is the way to go.

One thing to cover yet is how to select a winner in a Timeline Contest. If you have over 200 people like or comment on a post, or better yet 2,000 people, how can you easily generate the random winner from Like's or Comments?



Tools like TabSite's Timeline Contest App can help. Free to use on any fan page, the next section below covers the TabSite's Timeline Contest App features.

TabSite's Timeline Contest App

TabSite's goal is always to give Facebook Page Managers a suite of easy-to-use tools to enable Pages to create engagement and extend reach to their ideal audience through offering interactive features for tabs and now the News Feed as well!

The newest addition to the TabSite toolbox of contests, promotions, and engagement apps is the TabSite Timeline Contest App.

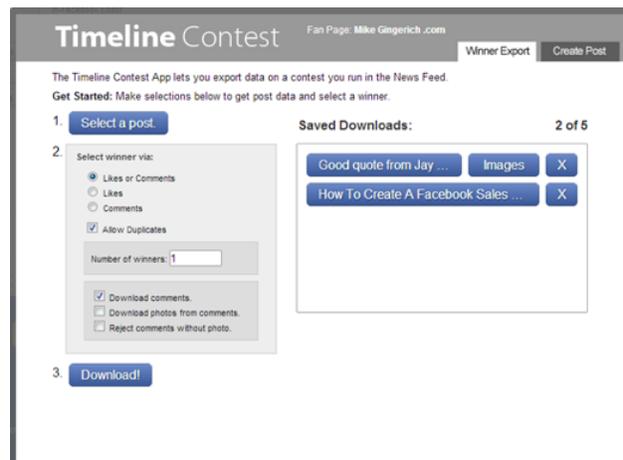
This new app gives Page Admins ability to create the Timeline News Feed post, as well as multiple tools to help a Page select winners based on the criteria of "Likes" and "Comments" they have used to enable fans to enter. Available for free and with advanced features at the paying levels, the Timeline Contest app makes it easy to comply and launch a Facebook approved timeline promotion!



TabSite's Timeline Contest app does the work of sorting entries and picking winners for you.

The tool allows pages to export the post data (likes/comments, etc) and randomly select winners according to the criteria you select.

As well, at the Platinum plan level, TabSite users can run Photo Contests in the News Feed and easily get a export of all comments and photos on the photo contest post!





Quickly Create New Contest Posts

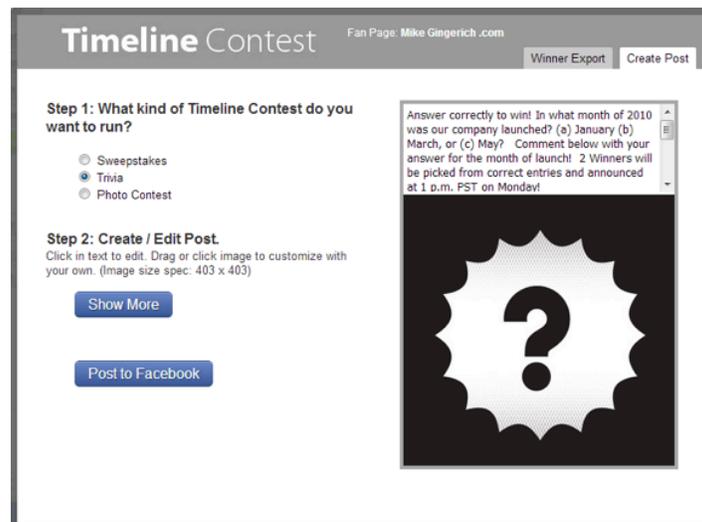
Additionally, TabSite users can create, customize, and launch their contest post from ready-made samples in the TabSite manager, making it easy to deploy, manage, and select winners via a timeline contest!

Post types ready to deploy in the manager include:

- Sweepstakes
- Trivia (visitors must comment with correct answer)
- Photo Contests

Available at the Free Plan and up! Any plan can use the Timeline Contest App. At the Platinum and Enterprise Agency levels there are more features including:

- Option to have multiple winners selected
- Ability to Export Photo Comments on a Post (for photo contests)
- Ability to Filter comments by a keyword (for trivia contests)
- Ability to store up to 5 contest exports for future access



The TabSite Timeline Contest App is available free for use on any page. [Try it now >>](#)



Conclusion:

I've covered a great deal of information!

You should now feel much more comfortable on how to create a dynamic, Timeline Contest for your Facebook page that meets Facebook promotion guidelines.

I hope that your Facebook business page increases fans, engagement, and sales based on implementing the ideas outlined here!

Thanks for downloading this ebook! Please share it with others than can benefit.



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For further information on TabSite's suite of tools for Facebook pages, please visit www.TabSite.com. TabSite offers contests, sweepstakes, gallery tabs, and more to help Pages boost engagement, capture leads, and grow sales.



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