

Called to Both Episode 28

Okay, friends, this is going to be such a fun episode because we are talking all about Facebook groups. So if you have a Facebook group that you would just love to grow, or if you don't have a Facebook group, but you've been thinking about starting one, and you want to know a little bit more about how it works and how it can be used to grow your brand and grow your business, this episode is for you. So today I'm going to be sharing my journey to hosting a 10,000 Plus member Facebook group and a few things that I've learned along the way that are going to help you in growing the community for your business in your brand. So stay tuned.

Hello, and welcome to the call to both podcast. I'm your host, join Michelle, and you're in the right place. If you're ready to grow your business, while also being the intentional and present mom you want to be. This show will leave you feeling inspired, equipped with tangible tips and encouraged to go after your own version of being called spoke. Let's dive in.

Alright, so let's start at the top. I feel like the first question that comes to mind when thinking about starting a Facebook group is like, is Facebook still relevant in our Facebook groups still relevant. And I want to share a few facts about Facebook with you that I personally found super interesting in some research that I did to prepare for today's episode. So in the research that I found, it stated that more than 1.8 billion people use Facebook groups every single month. And I even found a few articles stating that Facebook has come out and said that they are putting an emphasis on Facebook group growth, and it keeps their users on the platform.

And so they reward people who are starting these groups. So if you feel like you've gotten on Facebook, and you're seeing a lot of group activity, this is probably not a coincidence. And Facebook has already come out and said that this is true that they are promoting activity inside of Facebook groups, and that they will do what they can to help Facebook groups grow. And I have found this to be true in my own business and with the Facebook groups that I've managed in my business. So why should you consider a Facebook group for your business?

I think this is a good reminder of like, why like getting back to like the core and the motivation behind what is the point of pouring our time into a Facebook group, and what should be our focus as brands and business owners when considering a Facebook group. Now the first reason and the reason I started mine is that Facebook groups really allow your clients and customers to go one layer deeper and build a more lasting relationship with you and your brand, they're able to feel like they have a bit of a line of connection to you that you're accessible to them.

And that is so important for building trust and staying top of mind. But I actually think that there's another reason that you should consider starting a Facebook group. And that is that it can lead to a community and communities are very, very powerful. And I didn't originally start my Facebook group thinking that this was going to become a community and that it was going to be a movement that that grew beyond myself, because I didn't really know that that was a thing at the time, to be honest. But I think that that is one of the most powerful outcomes that you should consider a community is where others connect, where they're sharing ideas around a given topic.

And I think we're real change can happen inside of an industry. And that's exactly what happened for me inside of the photo boss community. So first, I want to back up and I just want to share the story behind my photography Facebook community called Photo boss and how I started it, how I came up with the idea and really what developed since then until now. And then I want to give you some tips and some takeaways for what you could implement into your own Facebook groups or any community online that you're building currently.

So I started my Facebook group in 2017, after I had already started my YouTube channel. So at the time, I was making tutorials and videos for photographers to help them step into this world of photography, professional photography, especially for portrait and wedding photographers. And I figured it could just be a good place to go a little bit deeper on conversations around these topics in a way that YouTube just doesn't support in like the comment section. It didn't. It's not exactly somewhere that people get into like long conversations, I guess I would say at least not on my channel.

And I at the time, I somewhat randomly came up with the name photo balls while I was at the gym, I was on the elliptical, and I actually plan on changing it later, when I could just come up with something better. But then a couple people said that they liked the name and I never got around to changing it. Now fast forward to last year, I actually went through the process of trademarking photo boss so that I could legally protect the name that I had invented and the name that really represented this huge community that had grown since the end of 2017. So after hitting publish on my first Facebook group with a temporary name that ended up Permanent, I was suddenly aware that I had no idea what I was doing when it came to growing a Facebook group or community.

But I very quickly started looking around for best practices and tips and just became a student of Facebook groups because I felt like a Facebook group could be a very powerful resource, and I wanted to give it a good go. So the growth of the Facebook group at the beginning was very slow. I celebrated every new member I watched the numbers slowly climb, and I continued to create content and show up. And as my vision for what photo boss would become got clearer. I started using that community as a way to connect more with fellow photographers who are feeling alone.

And this group just continued to grow with like minded photographers who wanted somewhere safe to ask questions, who wanted to share what you know, organic marketing practices they were working on, and just what it looked like to actually grow a business in this day and age, especially with social media and all the things that we had available to us. So at the time, and even up until now I went live I created posts, I did some challenges. I had guests inside the group hosted some giveaways, and honestly just ultimately consistently showed up for years. And now as of today's recording, we're sitting at about 10,400 members. And so I kind of just want to dive into sharing with you a few things that I have learned that will help you to grow a Facebook group a little bit faster, some best practices and some tips and just things to know about Facebook groups.

A quick word about today's sponsor, my favorite content creation tool for small business owners, called [descript](#). [descript](#) is the tool that I use to share smaller cut down pieces of this podcast, repurpose my YouTube videos and create animated on screen captions for reels and tick tock [descript](#) makes video editing and audio editing so easy, and it feels like you're editing inside of a Word doc, you can remove all of your filler words in a single click. And you can even make corrections to something that you said using the overdub tool. If you create content in your business, I highly recommend that you take a look

at this tool. It is absolutely packed with features. And it's very user friendly. As someone who does not have a professional background in video editing, I found it simple to use and learn. I'll have a link for you in the show notes. And you can give it a try today for free.

Okay, so number one tip for a Facebook group to grow faster, a few key elements that you're going to need. The first is your Facebook group needs to have a clear solution or a clear focus for that group. So my group was very clearly for aspiring or already professional photographers who wanted to learn how to grow their business market effectively and profit with their work. Without a clear focus, I am not sure people ever would have joined, and they most certainly wouldn't have stayed. So you have to give people a reason to join.

And then you have to give them reasons once they're in that group to stay in that group. And a lot of times, groups come off a little bit, like watered down or broad in hopes of attracting more people when really this just makes it not attractive to anyone. So very clear group focus. The second thing that you need is that your Facebook group needs exclusive content. And I kind of alluded to this in the first tip, but essentially, you have to give people a reason to stay. Now that exclusive content, it does not need to be this super elaborate thing where you create entire massive blog posts that only exist in the Facebook group or entire videos that only exist in the Facebook group, you absolutely could do that. But what I mean is you are diving deeper, maybe you do q&a is from time to time, maybe you show behind the scenes of how you develop your products or your business or your services in some way.

And I think the community itself, the the value that the community offers can be that exclusive content. But when you're first starting and the community itself isn't like a living organism where it kind of takes care of itself, then you have to be the exclusive content. So before your group reaches a point where people are talking to each other every single day, where your members are answering each other's questions and the group exists beyond you, you will have to provide a little bit of content, a little bit of reason for them to be there.

Alright, so tip number three is, as the leader you have to cast a vision. Now I didn't coin this. This actually comes from my friend Elizabeth Hudson, and she's super amazing, growing and fostering communities. And she talks about how as a leader, you have to cast a vision for the group. And I think this is such an important piece that I think sometimes gets missed and if you can cast a vision Going for what you think is possible with this group and what you want to accomplish and how you want this group to effect change in the lives of the members, people will stay. It's so powerful, and it's so amazing. So get right back to that vision, get back to your core.

And that's why we started with why, you know, why do you want to do this? Why do you want to start a Facebook group, if you can have an overarching vision that you can then share with your members, that is so powerful. Another thing that I learned is that Facebook does not like it when you link outside of the Facebook platform. So if you use a Facebook group to essentially post links to YouTube videos, to post links to podcasts, or in most contexts, just go to your blog. And most of the time, if you're trying to get your members to leave the platform, that is when Facebook is not really going to serve you well, you're going to notice that you just don't get any likes, you don't get much reach the interaction is very low. So you have to be thinking about the Facebook group as a closed system and figure out what you can do within the platform at least 75% of the time.

And then the other 25%, I think you can play around with having them leave or talking about outside platforms, or promoting your lead magnets or things like that. But really remembering that Facebook knows when you're trying to get people to leave the platform. And that that is not their point is going to be really helpful for you. All right. And then the fifth thing I found is that your posts and your group as a whole are going to thrive when you foster conversations within your community. So when you're a high engagement group, where you allow your members to share their opinions, when you allow them to vote on things and ask questions on things, the more engagement and conversations that are happening, the better your group will look algorithmically on the back end. Alright, so a couple tips for getting the most out of your Facebook group as a business are number one, I would make it private, and by request only. So make sure your group is not hidden.

Just make sure it's set to private. So you want it to be searchable. You want it to be something that if people look for whatever it is that you talk about, that they wouldn't be able to find it. But did they have to request to come in, because you really want people to feel like they're a member of a group. And if it's all just open, there's really no reason to become a member or to save it in their browser, right? So you have to make it private, and by request only. The next tip is to use the entrance questions to inform your content and get to know your audience better. So you can ask questions, when people come into your Facebook group, you can show them your group rules, you can ask them how they found the Facebook group so that you know what's working, you can ask them what their problems are, what they're searching for, in terms of content or in terms of community.

And that is such a valuable market research. That's how I came up with my first two programs. In my photo boss suite for photographers. That's how I've cultivated my coaching. And that's really how I decide what videos I'm going to make on YouTube. So use those questions and really look at them and make sure that you're leveraging them to inform your content. Another little insider tip is that you can use your group description to lead to your offers and your email list. So before people are even in the group itself, you can have a whole description about the group. So you have your your subject to the group, the title of the group, you have your art that's like the background. And then you also have your description. And before people are even allowed in the group, they can see that description. So if you write very clearly who your group is for, you can also put you know a link to your email list or a freebie or links to somewhere else that you'd like them to go.

So like when I think about what are like the highs and lows of a Facebook group, I think like number one high for me, as a Facebook group, leader or founder, someone that runs a group is when I see people connecting and cultivating real relationships, meeting industry friends inside of my group. And when their questions are getting answered, and I don't have to hover and babysit every post like that is such a high, I would say lows for Facebook group is when people come in and they pitch and they spam inside of your group. And that's totally going to happen especially as your group grows, especially as you know, Facebook starts recommending it if you start trending kind of in the suggested groups that can absolutely happen. So don't be afraid to screen posts, you can set the post to be screened or just delete, restrict members do whatever you have to do to preserve the integrity of the group because that is so important. You don't want people to think oh, this, this group is being overrun by spammers. What's really interesting about where I'm at now in this journey is that I have this Facebook group with 10,000 Plus members.

And I just now started a new Facebook group for this podcast, the call to both Facebook group and here's some stuff that I'm going to be doing as I start from zero and 2020 to number one I'm going to

make the members the focus and the hero so I like to allow allow my users to share their social media accounts and really connect with each other. In threads in posts, I do prompts constantly trying to get people to highlight their businesses and just allow spaces for them to talk about themselves. So making sure that the business isn't the focus that my business and that call to both isn't the focus that's going to be sprinkled in there, but really making the members the focus.

The second thing that I'm going to be doing is leveraging the exclusive content and exclusive interviews. I'm still playing around with this, but I think I might start streaming some of the recording of this podcast into that Facebook group. So you can get first listen, and even have a chance to ask questions to the interviewed guests. After we hit record, you'd be able to go in and do like a q&a at the end. So I'm playing around with this, if that sounds interesting to you definitely join the group, let me know that that stood out to you in today's episode, or if you have any other questions or ideas about what I could do, I would be so excited to hear from you. Okay, and then the next thing I'm going to be doing now with this new group, is asking members to invite their friends and letting it grow that way. So I will always push people from this podcast over to the Facebook group.

But I'm really not going as intensely as I did when I started photo boss, because I don't really, I don't feel like I'm in a rush to get to 1000 or 2000 or 10,000. Instead, I really, I'm now seeing that there's such a beautiful organic growth that can happen. And that sometimes like some of the best Facebook groups are really intimate. And so letting it just grow at its own pace, but also letting the members dictate how it grows, is something that I'm trying as well. So if you're in a Facebook group, you can invite other friends to join that group. So I will be motivating my existing members to invite their friends from time to time and just asking them if they know any other moms that are ambitious entrepreneurs that are also interested in this Facebook group to invite them to join.

So I would love to know do you have a Facebook group for your business? Do you plan on starting one? I want to hear all about it. Shoot me a DM over on Instagram, and let me know what you're thinking. If you have any other questions about what this could look like in your business, or if you think this could be a good episode to come back and maybe do like a part two on let me know I would be happy to make that happen. Thank you so much for listening to the show. If you enjoyed this episode, please help me get the word out about the call to both podcast by taking a screenshot of this episode right now and sharing it on your social media. I would also appreciate it if you would subscribe and leave me a five star review. Thanks again and I'll see you in the next episode.