How to properly use Facebook and increase "Likes" & Social Media Policies

As many of us are looking for new ways to attract potential volunteers into our ranks, we have to be constantly providing new and relevant information to do so. One of new newest and highest success rates to attract younger volunteers is social media, such as Facebook. A properly managed Facebook site can be just what your department needs to step up its game. Here are some ways to maximize those efforts, and in return increase likes.

1. Make sure the cover photo and profile pictures are relevant, current, and help others know immediately whose page they are on. Take out any guesswork for the viewer.

2. Use the "Call-To-Action" feature on the cover photo to give people a quick way of contacting your organization. You can have it say "Sign-Up" so people can get instant gratification.


3. Understand how "Insights" work and what you can do to improve your posts and what type of content that people like more often or share with others. Duplicating your previous success online creates more views and more likes.

4. When people message your Facebook page, have a system in place to ensure an expeditious reply. Don't wait 3 weeks to reply to a message, you never know if it's urgent.

5. Post relevant information frequently. There is plenty of information out there that we can post to our community. But make sure it's relevant and interesting. If you post the backyard burn information every single day, people will eventually lose interest and unlike your page, however it's ok to remind people every once and a while about the burn line so they can call on their own. Same thing goes for recruitment messages, don't make every message about needing people, be subtle and include this information from time to time.

6. Update your About Page to have content such as your Motto, Mission, Values and Vision Statement, or some other slogan that describes who you are and what your department is about. When search engine "crawlers" are gathering content, this gives them something to hold onto. You can also post your phone number, address, and website information.
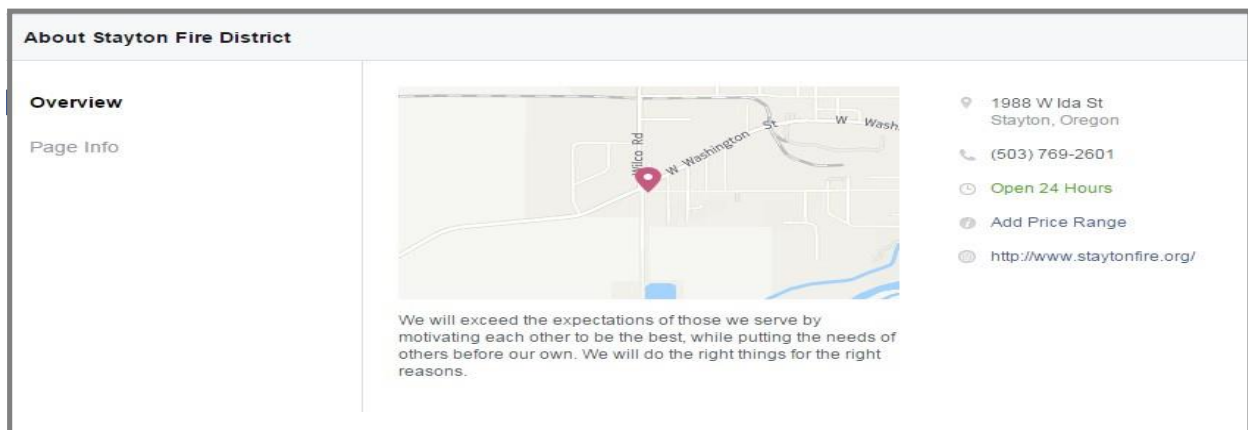
7. Like others pages that are similar to yours such as other fire departments, local businesses from your communities, relevant organizations (news, fire marshal's office, police, utilities, schools etc) and when applicable, make sure to like their posts and content as well. Share their content when it helps support community moral.

8. Don't beg for likes. I'll repeat, <u>don't beg for likes</u>! You will not make a dime if 5 or 5000 people like your page. The point of having a Facebook page for a fire department is to spread relevant information to an interested crowd, in a timely manner. In return we can work on new responders but let's not look desperate and publicly beg others to like our page. We want organic viewers who have a genuine interest in us. So you might wonder...how to we reach genuinely interested people? See #9

9. If you or people from your department "Like" your fire departments Facebook page, they can invite friends and family who might be interested to the page for you. It's ok to ask our current members if they can spread the word and invite others to like the page. In most cases, they will only invite people who they think might have a genuine interest in what's going on. Our best referrals usually come from our own people!

10. Post photos. Much of the training and calls we respond to are never seen. When we do have photos of events, training or calls it's nice to get those photos published (with discretion& permission). Our firefighters and their families can also appreciate seeing their loved ones at work. Make sure your department has a social media plan in place so you know what's ok and what's not, and take into consideration the events in particular. Much more could be written on the how to's and don'ts of social media and policy but that's not happening here. Instead, here are some links from the International Association of Fire Chief's sample policies and other links we found online to help.

[Social Media: Posting Photos](#)

[Social Media Usage Rules (Glendale Fire Department)](#)

[Social Media Usage Rules (Wilton Fire Department)](#)

[Social Media Policy (Town of Menasha Fire Department)](#)

[Social Media Policy (San Juan County Fire Department)](#)