



# CBLDF RETAILER RESOURCE

## Selling Comics on Facebook Live

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Many retailers are having to find new and creative ways to sell comics during the Covid-19 crisis. Facebook Live is a way to broadcast a live video on a Facebook page, in a Facebook group, or in a Facebook event. It can be used to broadcast a conversation, performance, Q&A, or virtual event. Comic shop owners adapting to remote retailing have started to use it to host Facebook Live sales. Facebook Live Sales let you talk directly to your customers about the comics you're selling and can be a great alternative to sales method while your store is closed. Here's a quick guide to get started!

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### What You Need

The best thing about Facebook Live Sales is that you don't need much to get started!

- ★ A Facebook Account
  - If you have a Facebook page for your business you can stream directly from there. This will ensure your sale reaches your customers and everyone who follows your page.
- ★ A Camera with Streaming Capabilities
  - This isn't as complicated as it sounds! You can use a laptop with a webcam or a smartphone. You'll just need to give Facebook permission to use your device's camera and microphone. If you want to get fancy you can hook up a USB camera to the computer you'll be streaming from and use that.
- ★ Things to Sell
  - If you own a comic shop then you have this in spades. You can use your sale to focus on back issues, graphic novels, toys, or make it a mix.
- ★ Yourself!

- You can technically run a whole Facebook Live sale with yourself as the cameraman, auctioneer, and tech support.
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## The Basics

There are some basic logistics that you need to sort out before you're able to go any further in setting up your Facebook Live. Planning ahead will save you a ton of headaches down the road.

### ★ Create a System for Viewers to Claim an Item

- The easiest system here is to have viewers claim an item in the comments of your livestream. Instruct viewers to be specific in their claim. If you're showing multiple Batman issues at once and someone comments "claim Batman," you're not going to know which they'd like.
- Sometimes multiple people will try to claim the same item. Come up with a rule to deal with this when it happens. First claim wins is usually the most fair way to go.
  - Sometimes it will look like two claims were made at the same time. If you're unsure let both parties know that you will look into the dispute after the sale is over. Once you end your livestream you will be able to view all comments in chronological order with timestamps. You'll be able to see who commented first this way.
- Let the viewer know their claim was accepted.
  - Like the winning claim or reply with a comment letting the person know they've won their claim. This will hopefully help prevent confusion over who won when items have multiple bidders. It will also keep people from bidding on an item that may still be on the screen but has already been sold.
  - This is when having an extra set of eyes to watch the comments can be helpful! If you're flying solo, then make sure that you're able to watch comments and take some time to respond to them before moving onto the next item.

### ★ Create a System to Get Payment and Shipping Info

- You don't want to have to follow up individually with every single person who claims something on your livestream. An easy way to avoid this is to have everyone fill out a form prior to watching. In the form they can give paypal info, so they can be invoiced once the show ends as well as a shipping address. This can be as simple as creating a google form and linking it in the Facebook Live video description.

### ★ Decide How Much to Charge for Shipping

- Will you be shipping everything out or will you have different delivery options? If you plan on having different delivery options make sure viewers can select their preference in your form. It might be easy and a selling point for your live show if you come up with a flat rate for all purchases.
  - ★ Communicate Everything Ahead of Time
    - Once you've decided on systems for claiming items, getting payment info, shipping, etc, make sure you communicate them with your customers. Dedicate the first five or so minutes of each of your live show to going over these rules.
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## Prep Work

So now you have everything you need to run a Facebook Live Sale. You're ready to go right? Let's pause and do some prep work first, so we can hit this out of the park on our first try.

- ★ Watch Facebook Live Sales Put on by Other Comic Shops
  - The best way to see how Facebook Live sales are run is by watching sales run by seasoned veteran sellers. Check out their set-ups. Can they be used as models for your show? How do they handle tech issues or disputes in the comments? Take what's best from each show and use it to inform how you set yours up.
  - Some retailers who run great Facebook Live shows include: [Space Cadet Collection](#), [Ultimate Comics](#), [A Comic Shop](#), [Carol & John's Comics](#).
- ★ Decide What Your Show Will Focus On
  - I'm sure you have a lot of things you want to sell. Consider what you think your audience would be most excited to buy. Is that your key issues or your graphic novels? Keeping a theme for your show can help you promote it better to your customers.
- ★ Price Ahead of Time
  - Once you know what you're selling, make sure the items you want to sell on the show are all priced. Pricing ahead of time will help ensure your show runs smoothly. You won't be distracted determining a product's worth when you're trying to sell it live.
  - Consider how you want to price the products you're selling on your show. This is a different format than selling comics in your shop. A book might not move at the price it would when it's displayed in your comic shop. If you do lower your prices, keep your margins in mind. You don't want to lose money on a sale!
- ★ Signage

- Signage is key when it comes to selling on Facebook Live. Assume you'll have temporary audio issues or a lag and plan for it. Have comics you plan on selling clearly labeled with their issue number, and price. For more valuable books, it might not hurt to toss the grade on there as well.
  - ★ Test Everything. Then Go Ahead and Test Again
    - You definitely don't want to realize that you don't have sound in the middle of your first livestream or that your internet connection isn't strong enough to handle the stream. Prevent that by checking things ahead of time. Go ahead and test your internet connection, your video, and your audio.
      - The best way to do this is to run a practice stream. Set things up exactly as you would if you were going live on your Facebook page. Set up a private Facebook group with you as the only member. Then go live in that group. Since it's private, no one will see your test stream and you'll be able to see any kinks in your set-up that need to be fixed before primetime.
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## Promotion

If you're confident that you're ready for your first Facebook Live sale, then it's time to promote it! Give yourself some time between your first announcement and your first sale to help ensure you have an audience.

- ★ Set Up a Facebook Event for the Sale
  - Set up an event advertising your sale. Invite any of your customers or Facebook friends who might be interested. If they hit interested or going in the event, Facebook will send them a reminder before you go live. There's so many online happenings nowadays it can be easy to miss something without a reminder.
- ★ Post Pictures Before the Sale
  - Take some photos of the items you think are going to get the most interest during your sale. These photos will help grab some attention and garner excitement.
    - If you did make a Facebook event for your sale, post these photos on your main Facebook page and in the event. Attendees will get a notification every time you post something leading to the event.
- ★ Do a Giveaway
  - Doing a giveaway or raffle can help drum up some interest in your sale. Find something from your inventory that is exciting, but that you don't mind giving

away. One way to run this is to have everyone who shares your livestream entered to win the item you're giving away!

★ Keep a Schedule for Your Live Sales

- If you plan on doing multiple live sales, make sure to host them regularly. Pick a time and day of the week that you know will work for you. Keeping a regular schedule means that people can plan to tune in.

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## Gettin' Fancy

You've nailed the basics. Read on if you want to take your Facebook Live game to the next level.

★ Use a Streaming Software to Buff Up Your Video

- If you want to get fancy, using a streaming software can let you do some really cool things with your Facebook Live video. OBS is free to download and is quite simple to use. You can use it to do things like, add a video clip to into your show or add text scroll that gives customers reminders during your show.
  - You can [download OBS here](#). It also has a list of resources as well as a forum that should answer any questions you have. Here's a good [starter guide](#).

★ Try Out a Reply Sale After Your Facebook Live Sale

- Unsure what to do with unsold items after your Facebook Live Sale? You can try moving them with a reply sale. Post a gallery of photos of your unsold items or post the photos in a comment thread. Include the price (the price should be lower than what it was listed at during the Live sale. Consider this the last chance to buy price). People can claim the book by commenting on the photo or replying to the comment!

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## Tips and Tricks

★ Don't Focus on One Item for Too Long

- Don't waste a ton of time focusing on an item if it's not selling. This can stall the momentum of your show and give people an excuse to tune out. If there's not interest, set the item aside. You can always try selling it again in a later show.

★ Don't Get Discouraged

- There is always a learning curve when you're trying something new. If you have technical difficulties or other issues in your first few shows, then you'll be able to learn from them for future shows.
- Don't worry if you have less viewers than you'd like in your first few shows. It takes time to build an audience and teach your customers a new way to buy comics from you.

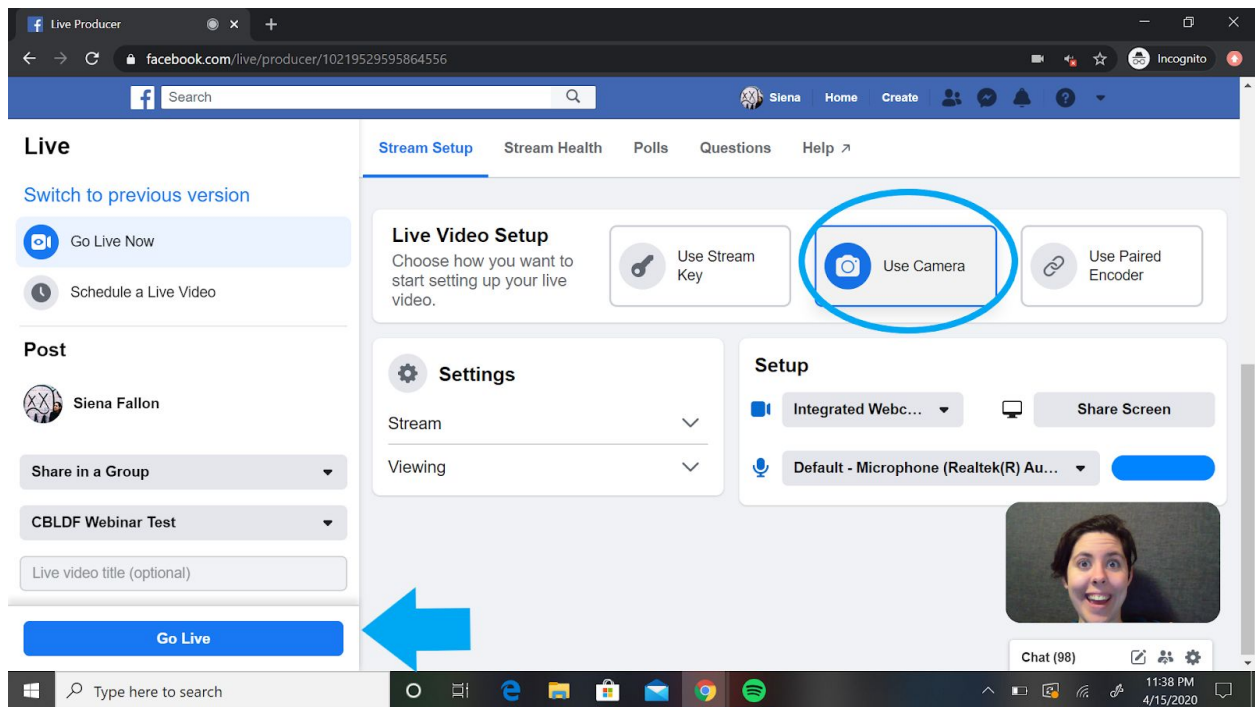
★ Don't Be Afraid to Adapt

- If you notice something wrong with your set-up don't be afraid to change things. Maybe you see that back issues aren't selling on your show. Then go ahead and try selling graphic novels on the next one!

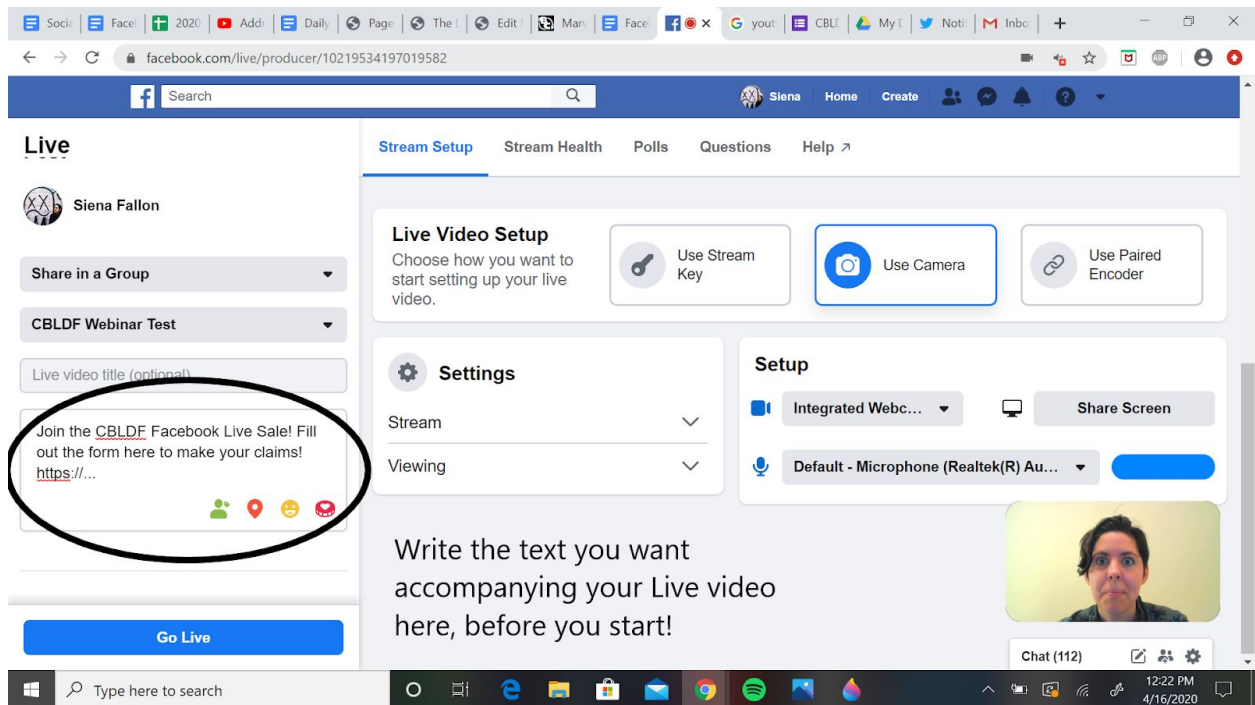
★ Have Fun With It

- Chat with your customers! Talk about why you love the book you're selling. Facebook Live sales work well because you're able to show off your personality. One of the strengths of local comic shops is the connection between the owner and the customer. Capitalize on that and remind your customers what they love about buying comics from you!

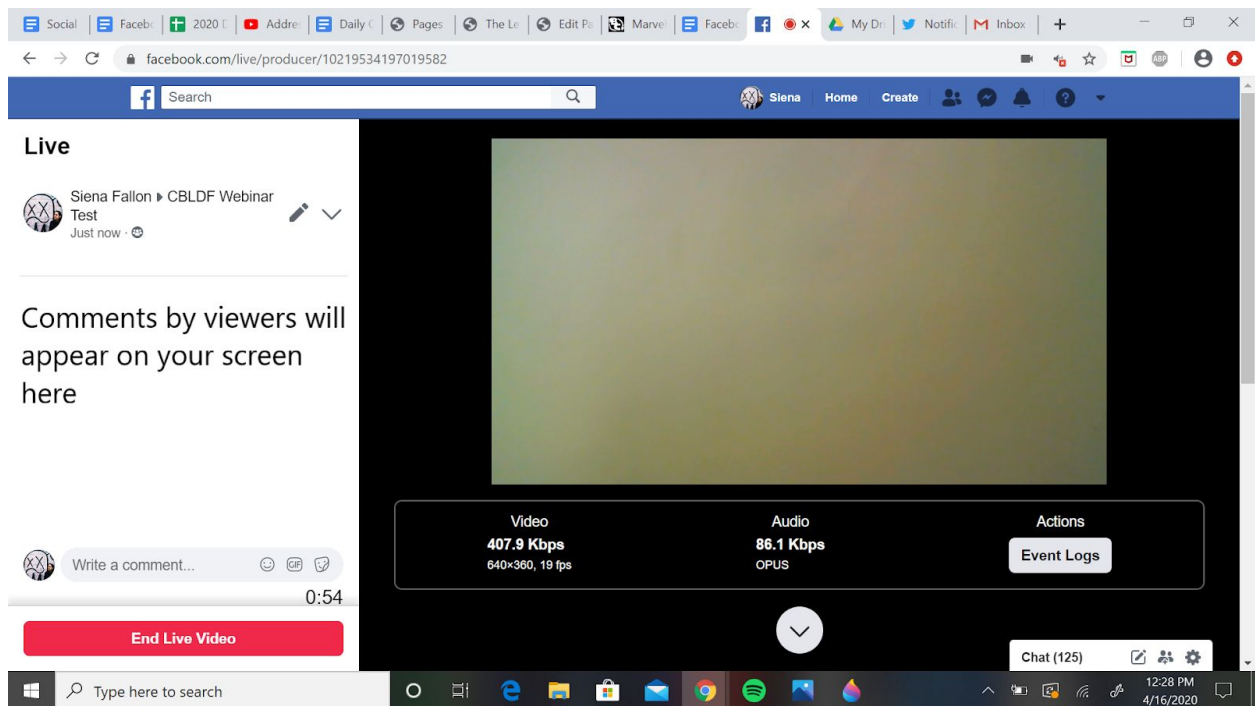
## What Facebook Live Looks Like



When you hit Live Video you will be taken to the Facebook Live Producer page that looks like this. If you're using the webcam on your computer or a usb camera, you'll hit Use Camera. A preview video will pop up in the corner. Once you're ready to start you can hit "Go Live."



Before you hit go live you'll want to write out the text you want to accompany your video. You can link a form you'd like customers to fill out here too.



This is what it will look like once you're live. Comments will appear in real time on the left hand side. Once you're finished you'll just need to hit End Live Video.



This is what OBS looks like. In this example, I added the CBLDF logo to the video and have some info about the live sale scrolling beneath. Under scenes, you can see that I was able to set up an intro and outro as well. Get the basics ready before you move onto using streaming software like this!

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## Additional Resources

Facebook's Guide to Facebook Live:

<https://www.facebook.com/facebookmedia/solutions/facebook-live>

Jen King: Behind the Scenes Facebook Live Video:

<https://www.facebook.com/spacecadetscommanderking/videos/10223223200957382/>

Comic Book Shopping Network- A group dedicated to comic sales on FB Live:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/409470939573503/>