

# Social Networking

## to Promote Your Business



An internet marketer has many tools with which to build and grow their business. You have advertising, content, search engine optimization, and linking among many other marketing and promotion tools and strategies.

Even though social networking is coming up to being 2 decades old, many internet marketers are just now discovering the power this marketing and promotion tool has. Now that we have giants like Facebook and Twitter, people are finally starting to pay attention.

What does this all mean? It means that participating in social networking is a tremendous opportunity to promote your business.

### **What Is Social Networking?**

'Social Networking Site' as it is defined by TechWeb is, "A Web site that provides a virtual community for people interested in a particular subject or just to "hang out" together."

Whatis.com defines social networking as "the practice of expanding the number of one's business and/or social contacts by making connections through individuals."

### **Is There Anybody Out There?**

Before you begin to even consider social networking as a tool to promote your business, you probably want to make sure your particular audience actively participates in social networking. A bit of research and some time on various social networking sites will tell you what you need to know and chances are, your audience is participating.

According to the same NetPop study cited earlier, the most common social networking participants are between the ages of 18-29. The next most popular age group are people 30-39 and even seniors are getting in on the action. In fact, social networking usage is increasing amongst all age groups, so don't let these stats deter you. Dig in to find where your market it is.

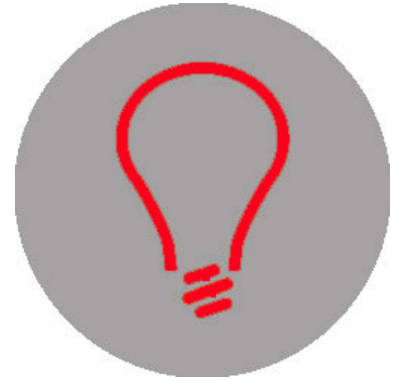
Over the next few pages, we're going to take a look at three main topics. The first chapter is devoted to discussing the benefits of social networking, mainly what you can do with these sites to market and promote your business. In the second chapter, we'll take a look at two main social networking sites, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to explore your marketing and promotion options in depth. Finally, we'll wrap it up with a quick bit about social networking dos and don'ts.

Let's get started!



## Social Networking, More than a Meet and Greet - Use It to Promote Your Company

Social networking is being used by companies of all sizes, in every industry imaginable and all around the globe. It's being embraced as a tool that connects you directly to your customers, where they hang out, and it gives you as a business owner a unique opportunity to provide value, brand your company and well...sell your product or service.



According to the folks at Microsoft, social networking enables companies to:

1. Express Yourself as A Brand
2. Create and Maintain Good Conversations
3. Empower Participants

But how can you accomplish all the above, you ask, by posting comments on social networking sites?

### How Social Networking Grows Your Business

There's no doubt, social networking gives you access to your audience but what else can you accomplish with this tool?

Social gives business owners the ability to:

- Build an online presence
- Increase website traffic
- Boost SEO
- Establish credibility
- Connect with your audience
- Glean valuable information to grow your business



Whether your online business is just starting out, or you're a large corporation, adding social networking to your marketing strategy will help you promote and grow your business.

### Options to Use Social Networking to Promote Your Business

There are a number of ways you can use social networking to promote your business. Let's take a look at the most popular and powerful.

- **Share Lessons and Experiences** – Social networking is about connecting. If you have something relevant to your industry to share, share it. Start conversations and partake in them.

- **Share Pictures, Audio and Video** – Many social networking sites embrace visual forms of posting as well. YouTube of course is a video social networking site but even Facebook lets you link to and post audio and video messages. And Twitter developers have created picture and video sharing applications.
- **Share Information** - Post interesting and relevant statistics, quotes, or headlines and start a conversation. When appropriate, link to your company website.
- **Drive Traffic to Your Blog or Website** - Post a curiosity generating or attention grabbing headline and include a link to your website.
- **Promote** – Launching a new product? Announce it via social networking sites. Offering a huge holiday discount? Let people know, but use this approach with the other more relationship-building aspects of social networking. Nobody wants to follow a company that simply pushes their products.
- **Advertise** – Many social networking sites also sell advertising space. Facebook has run a successful advertising program for quite some time, and Twitter and LinkedIn are in the game as well. They all offer very highly targeted opportunities to advertise your business, even if you're on a strict budget.

Before we move into the next chapter and look at the details of how to accomplish all of the above with Twitter and Facebook, let's take a look at a few of the most popular social networking sites.

## Top Social Networking Sites

Here are just some of the many popular social networking sites:

1. Facebook
2. Twitter
3. Google+
4. LinkedIn
5. StumbleUpon
6. Flickr
7. YouTube
8. Pinterest



The benefits to using social networking to promote your business have a wide reach. You'll not only connect with your audience on a new and more personal level, which is required in today's competitive market, you'll also reach a whole new group of people. Couple that with the fact that social networking is extremely cost effective and your return on investment is like nothing else in

your marketing toolbox. Next, we'll take a look at two of the more powerful social networking tools, Facebook and Twitter. We'll also take a brief look at LinkedIn.

## **How to Use Facebook and Twitter**

Presently, Twitter and Facebook seem to be the most prosperous social networking tools businesses can use to promote their business and in this chapter we'll take a look at these two sites in depth. We'll also take a quick look at LinkedIn, a social networking site for businesses to connect with each other – great if you're a service provider or have a need to connect with other business owners.

### **How to Use Facebook to Promote Your Business**

Facebook is a rapidly growing and had over 1 billion users at the end of 2013. This makes it a ripe opportunity to boost your business.

The first step to promote your business with Facebook is to a "Facebook Page" and you can only do this after you have a personal profile. Facebook offers you the ability to separate your personal and professional social networking activities and offers a number of settings, which you can adjust to meet your needs.

The trick here is to get people to "like" your page. If you're familiar with Twitter, you can employ a strategy of following others to get them to follow you back, but Facebook Pages don't work in such a reciprocal manner. You can invite your friends to like your Page, tell your mailing list, include "Like Us on Facebook" buttons on your website and even use paid advertising on Facebook.

#### **Other ways to get your page noticed:**

- While signed in as your Page, engage other Page owners through their own content. Like, comment and get in on the discussion.
- If you run your business offline, be sure to share your Facebook Page in your store or on printed materials.
- Have a strong theme to your Facebook Page that sets it apart from other Pages...then people will be singing your praises and bringing followers to you.
- Post regularly and gauge what interests your followers. Do they respond more to photos, videos, quotations or is it something else?
- Create a compelling page design with an attention-getting profile picture and cover photo.
- Have fun and be personable. Often, Facebook users want to see the "real" person behind the business, but remember to stay professional.
- Respond to comments and engage your followers in discussions.

Facebook also offers the opportunity to create "Facebook Groups", which are great for topic discussions with your customers, peers and more.

And remember, you can always find a lot of useful tools and widgets to integrate Facebook into your other marketing. Have a look here for ideas: <https://developers.facebook.com/docs/plugins/>

## **How to Use Twitter to Promote Your Business**

Your first step to use Twitter effectively to promote your business is to register and create an appropriate profile. That will include potentially creating a custom Twitter background and learning about all of the tools, applications and gadgets you can use to optimize Twitter as a marketing tool.

You'll need to decide whether you want to use your personal name or business name. Many people suggest using your personal name to connect on a more personal level, but the branding that using your company name affords can be attractive as well. Many people have personal and business accounts, and juggling them can be challenging, but it makes it easier to separate your personal and business ventures. Add to that, if you plan to sell your business down the line, having a separate Twitter account that you can pass on is probably a good idea.

## **Ways to Get Noticed on Twitter**

- Follow other likeminded businesses and Twitter users. Engage them in conversations and many will follow back.
- Just like with Facebook, tell your website visitors, newsletter subscribers, customers and more.
- Embark on a targeted Twitter ads campaign to get more follows.
- Use hashtags and get in on popular discussions. A hashtag when one or more words is prefixed with the “#” symbol. This instantly lets Twitter’s search engine deliver any tweet containing that hashtag, if you search for it.
- Use retweets, but add some useful thoughts. Retweeting is the process of rebroadcasting another user’s tweet if it is funny, noteworthy or otherwise interesting to your followers. Instead of just doing a plain old retweet, add your own thoughts or encouragement to the author, so you can make a better connection.
- Design your page with a branded background, profession profile picture and header photo. First impressions are important, so make the best on possible.
- Pay attention to what your followers seem to like. Do they like answering questions, respond to photos, etc?
- Create or join tweet chats. Tweet chats employ the use of hashtags, but are usually during a certain block of time where people get together and discuss a specific topic.
- Be courteous and respond to tweets directed at you. Where possible, thank people for retweeting you.
- Use the Twitter Advanced Search function to find people to follow and people who might follow you. You can also look through the follower lists of people who target the same market as you.

## Advanced Search

**Words**

All of these words

This exact phrase

Any of these words

None of these words

These hashtags

Written in  ▼

**People**

From these accounts

To these accounts

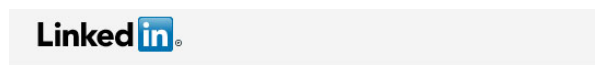
Mentioning these accounts

## Promoting Your Business With LinkedIn

Designed for professionals to network with other professionals, LinkedIn isn't like other social networking sites. It's ideal for finding service based companies to work with and if you're a service company, it's a great place to be represented. Like many social networking sites, users can invite, create and join groups and search for like minded individuals. However, LinkedIn offers much more.

### LinkedIn allows business owners to:

- Receive Recommendations – Other business owners can boost your profile by recommending you and your business.
- Create Groups – Like Facebook, you can create a group for your target audience to join. This gives you the ability to connect with and market directly to them.
- Utilize Applications - LinkedIn offers applications like Blog Link, Polls, and Reading Lists to help you enhance your profile and connect with others.
- Advertise your business on LinkedIn for more awareness, traffic and exposure.



**Connect, share ideas**



## **Time to Get Social!**

LinkedIn is a fantastic opportunity to build your professional network. Along with Facebook and Twitter, and any other social networking tools you choose to use, promoting and growing your business just got easier. That being said, we'd be remiss if we didn't mention a few do's and don'ts.