

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE  
TO GETTING STARTED WITH  
**SOCIAL  
MEDIA  
MARKETING**



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The chapters in this book will help you gain a firm grasp on using Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and Pinterest. Once you understand the function of each platform, you'll be able to navigate them with ease and functionality, and you can start creating buzz in no time. Here are just a few examples of ways in which you can use social media to expand and promote your business:

- Use Facebook and Google+ as a customer retention tool by personally posting on clients' profiles, thanking them for their business.
- Tweet daily or weekly discounts to your followers on Twitter.
- Post new product pictures or recommended items on your Pinterest board, keeping your clients visually interested.
- Make your brand a vital resource by posting business related advice or tips on your Facebook page.
- Keep customers informed of your company's happenings, events, or news via Google+.
- Post photos of relevant info (products, events, happy customers, everyday office happenings) on Facebook and Pinterest to give your followers a glimpse into your real life.
- Use all your social media platforms for sales leads. Potential clients may start messaging you on Facebook or Twitter, so be prepared to interact on these mediums as well.

Creating a fanbase isn't just for rock stars. Your business, no matter how small, can have fans. Social media allows you to go beyond just the services you provide, by being a resource and a brand that people rely on. You can



be a real person who shares real thoughts. You can be a team of people that loves helping their clients and loves to show it off, too. Social media transcends traditional ways of business. You are now visible, able to be heard, and given the opportunity to interact with customers in a way like never before.

Each chapter in this book is meant to provide you with a base to start from, as well as best practices for each particular platform. You'll also gain a great overview of how to use each platform to your advantage. You don't have to dive into all of them at once either; start with one social media site and become familiar with it until you've got it mastered. Here are a few things you can do to get familiar with each social media network:

- Look for other businesses that may offer the same products or services you do and check out their profiles and recent activity. This will give you an idea of some things you could, and should do, too.
- Set up a test account either as a personal page or under a different name. From here, you can play around at your leisure without worrying about making mistakes in posts, or posting something on accident.
- Identify features: On Facebook, this would be learning how tag people or pages (this can be done by putting the @ symbol in front the person's name or page you'd like to tag.) Another great feature on a Facebook Page is the customized tabs. You can add a tab for users to sign up for your newsletter, to access specials or discounts, and to advertise upcoming events you may have. On Twitter, identify how to reply to other users, how to retweet, and when to create hashtags. Research some apps and add-ons available that may be useful to your brand.





Sure, Facebook may have been created by a couple of college kids for college kids originally, but today everyone and their grandmother is interacting, “friending” and “Liking” on the uber-popular social networking site. More than one billion users are active on Facebook today – including many in your community. Neighbors are chatting about the takeout they just had. Parents are recommending kid-friendly excursions to one another. Colleagues are sharing career tips and beach reading suggestions.

As a small business, Facebook offers a convenient, and often free, avenue to connect with potential customers, build relationships with existing customers and become a fixture in your community, whether that’s a small town or a worldwide virtual network of fans and aficionados.

When people Like your Facebook Page, they’re opening your message to their own social network. When they comment on, or Like a status update or post, it will appear in some of their friends’ Facebook news feeds, sending your business viral – whether on a small or large scale. And when they Like your page, there is an opportunity for them to tag you in their own updates as well – again, opening you up to their friend list.

## Getting Started

**The Facebook Page:** It’s like your personal account page, but instead of having to approve friends, anyone can come along and click the Like button, saying “Hey, I’m a fan.” Your Page contains information about your business (as much as you want to add). On your Page you can update your status, add links to interesting articles or webpages and receive comments



– both privately and publicly. If Facebook users Like your page then your updates have the ability to reach more and more people as those who Like you interact with your Page.

The number one key to an effective Facebook Page? Engage your fans. You want the people who Like your Page to read status updates, comment on and even share your updates with their friends. This is important because the way Facebook decides what to show users in their news feed is based on whom they regularly interact with. If you want to be part of that – without paying for the privilege – then you need to be worthy of their interaction. Facebook Pages aren't for the lazy, but neither do you have to be an expert, or post to your Page a billion times a week. In the next sections you'll learn how to create an effective Facebook presence and have plenty of time to run your real-world business.

## Setting Up an Effective Facebook Page

You've probably already [created your Facebook Page](#). But do you have the right information on it? It's not enough just to create a Page. You need to create a useful Page that is regularly updated and managed in a professional manner.

Start by making sure the information on your About page is up to par.

## What to include on your About page

Your About page is where folks go to learn about your business. This isn't the place for selling, but rather for a friendly introduction. There are many potential fields, but you should know that you don't need to fill them all out. Furthermore, you don't have to write novels for the ones you do.





For brick-and-mortar establishments, you'll want to fill out the Basic Info section (make sure your page is classified as a Local Business) with your price range, attire, hours, services, products and payment options, as appropriate. These are the things that customers – particularly new customers – want to know before they check you out in person. Can they use their debit card? Or will the trip require an ATM stop first?

You should also include your address phone number and website so customers can find you.

Next, fill out the other About sections like Mission, Company Overview and Description. Remember to keep your words succinct but evocative – and remember that you are wooing customers, not petitioning for an award. So speak to customers in these sections about who you are as a business and what you offer.

## Facebook Pages 101

Start by creating a Page. Go to your Facebook Settings page and click the “Create a Page” link at the bottom of the screen. While this link is on all Facebook pages, it's easiest to get to here.

You will be prompted to choose from six identifying options for your page. Choose the one that best fits your business. For instance, if you are a local establishment, choose the Local Business option as it will automatically set up your Page to include key business information like your business address and operating hours.



The good news? This can be changed. No matter what category and designation you choose, you can always edit and change the selection via your Admin panel.

Now, follow the prompts to fill out information and set your Page to “live.” If you need more time to work on getting it just right, you can leave the Page offline (others can’t see it or Like it) until you are ready.

## How often to update

Be sure to keep your About page up-to-date. Review the page at least quarterly to ensure its accuracy – and remember to update the listed business hours as soon as you change them. It doesn’t make for happy customers if your posted hours don’t match your actual hours.

## Facebook Success Spotlight: eCreamery in Omaha, Nebraska

Check them out: [www.facebook.com/eCreamery](http://www.facebook.com/eCreamery)

Created in 2004, eCreamery is an ice cream shop in Omaha, Nebraska, that also sells its ice cream and gelato for mail order via their website, [www.ecreamery.com](http://www.ecreamery.com). The unique business has been on Facebook for about five years, says owner Abby Jordan.



## On the Page



On the Facebook Page, eCreamery shares pictures of their ice creams with short updates about them. They also share occasional links and photos of new mix packs available for mail order, as well as the custom labels that customers can order. The updates and photos generate many Likes and comments.



“It’s just a really great way for us to talk about our new products and to showcase some of the fun things people are doing with their customized labels,” says Jordan.

And with more than 6,000 Likes, the page is reaching many people with their creamy, dreamy mission while also finding new eyes.

“It’s a good place for people to go that don’t know about our business to learn about what we’re doing. It’s been a great sounding board for our customers to check out what others are saying,” says Jordan, who says Facebook has been good for spreading the word about their new products, press and other news.

### ***eCreamery’s Facebook Strategy: Keep it fresh***



Jordan says that by sharing smaller updates about single flavors and info about batches of ice cream, they are able to keep the content fresh without always looking for the biggest thing to share. “We take pictures one afternoon and then we use that for the next few weeks or months,” she says, which makes posting a little easier. But don’t confuse that for easy. “It definitely takes time,” says Jordan.

## Posting on Facebook

Facebook isn’t like an ad or website that can be created and left alone. It’s something that needs to be nurtured, updated and kept active regularly. How often is regularly? That’s up to you depending on your time and the availability of new content and ideas. A good rule of thumb is to try to update every few days – at least once a week, though more is better. That said, you don’t want to update too often or your message will be lost in a sea of posts.

## Updates 101: Writing posts that get responses



If you are a business selling food or products, quality images accompanied by one-liners that intrigue and enlighten make for great Facebook posts. For instance, eCreamery recently posted a photo of a fresh batch of cookies-and-cream ice cream with text that read, “A delicious standard. Cookies & Cream.” That simple post generated 68 likes, eight comments and one share. Just remember that when posting images they need to be either your own images or ones used with the permission of the photographer.

So, how do you write posts that get responses? Keep it simple. Keep it interesting and evocative (a mouthwatering photo of ice cream is both of these things!). And don't be afraid to celebrate successes – but not too often. Much like in life, you don't want to brag too much.

You can also share links on your Facebook Page. These may be links to blog posts or specific pages on your website. Or you can share the love with other local businesses or topics related to your business with links. Always include a brief line or two of text so people know why and what you are sharing.

## 6 Ideas for Good Facebook Updates

- Photo with a brief description
- One or two sentences about something happening locally
- Good news about your business or the local community
- Specials, promotions or sales (keep it brief but packed with info)
- Links to relevant blog posts or website pages
- Links to media mentions



## Paying for exposure on Facebook

Facebook now offers the ability to create ads and promote specific posts. You pay for these services, setting a specific amount you are willing to spend on each campaign. The cost of ads and promotion is directly related to how many fans your Page already has. For instance, if you have about 100 fans, then your promotion could reach three to six thousand people for just \$5-\$10. However, when you have thousands of fans, the cost of promotion rises sharply.

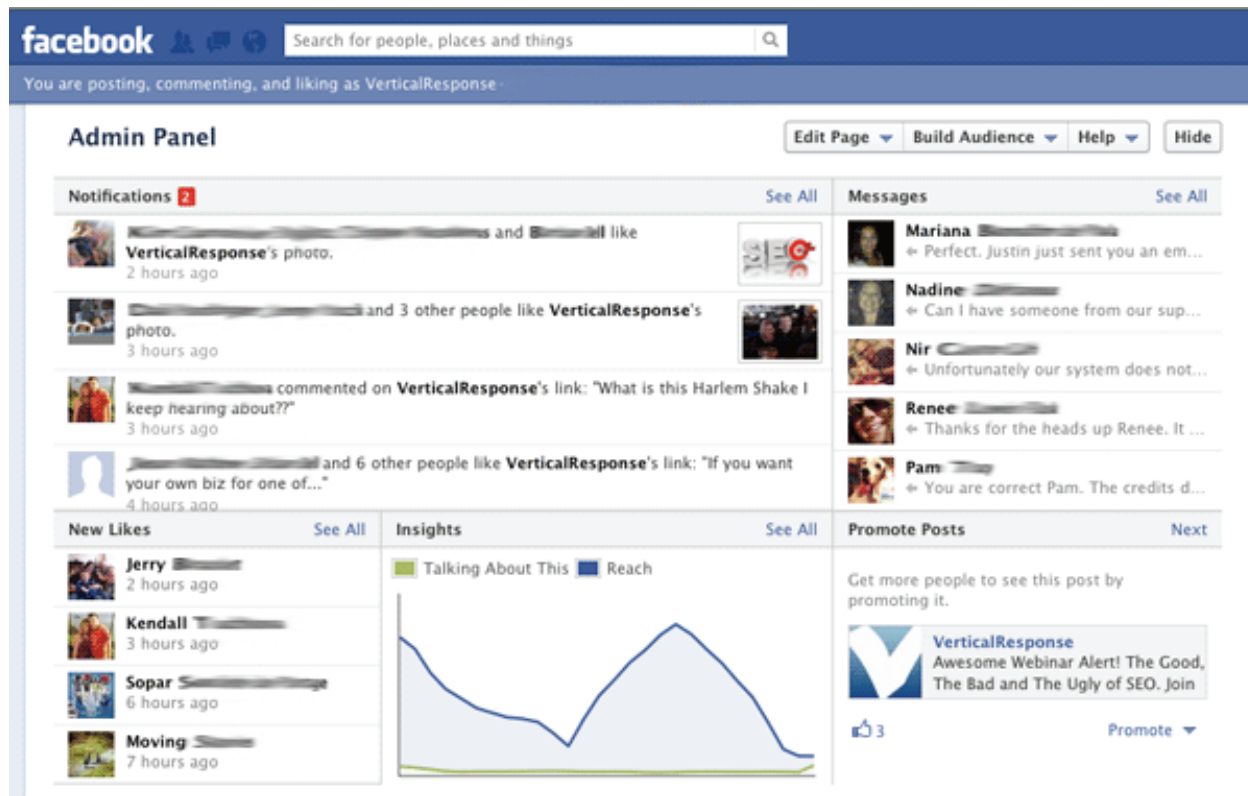
**Facebook Ads:** This offers a way to gather a wide range of Facebook users. On your Facebook Page, you can create ads by going to “Build Audience,” and then clicking “Create an Ad.” From there, you can create an ad designed to get more Facebook Likes, share your latest status in an ad or create a custom ad. You can also choose to limit the promotion to a certain geographical area – such as your town. And you can set a daily budget and time frame. There’s also an “ongoing” option if you want the ad to run indefinitely. What’s great about these ads is that you can really zero in on the users you want to reach.

**Facebook Share:** The Facebook Share promotion (seen as a small “Share” link on the lower right of posts) is for specific posts on your Facebook Page. Promotions last for three days, or until the budgeted amount for the promotion is reached (whichever comes first). This option allows you to reach all the folks who like your Page as well as their friends. The post appears with a “sponsored” designation on Facebook news feeds. While this option can lead to new Likes on your page and more interaction, it should be used sparingly, with a focus on posts that contain an urgent



message (think contests) or that you most want to be seen. What's good about these ads is that they are simple and fast to create and let you easily promote specific messages.

## Understanding the Page Admin Tool



The screenshot shows the Facebook Page Admin Panel for 'VerticalResponse'. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation links for 'Edit Page', 'Build Audience', 'Help', and 'Hide'. The main content is divided into several sections:

- Notifications:** A list of recent activity including likes and comments on photos and links.
- Messages:** A list of private messages from users.
- New Likes:** A list of users who recently liked the page.
- Insights:** A line graph showing 'Talking About This' (green) and 'Reach' (blue) over time.
- Promote Posts:** A section for promoting posts, featuring a post about a webinar.

**Notifications:** In this section, you can see the latest activity on your Page. It tells you who commented and Liked your status updates as well as those who left messages on your Page.

**Messages:** These are private messages from Facebook users. Keep an eye out for new ones here, as they are easy to miss and should be responded to (even if it's just with a "Thanks!").







### ***Planning techniques***

Depending on your business, you can create a calendar of what to post and when. Always add fresh, recent content or your Page will seem stiff and dated.

### ***Responding to criticism***

In any open forum, criticism will happen. It's how you respond to it that matters most. First, don't be defensive. Criticism of your business isn't a personal attack. Listen, respond appropriately and take it offline if it gets too heated. Avoid deleting criticism (that always looks bad) unless the attacks are personal or offensive to others. As eCreamery's Jordan says, try to make it right. "Everybody's going to make mistakes. No business is perfect," says Jordan.

## **The Bottom Line**

Facebook is a social media marketing tool that gives you many opportunities for organic and paid promotions to spread the word about your small business. Jump in and get started using the tips in this guide and have fun.



# Chapter 2

## Twitter

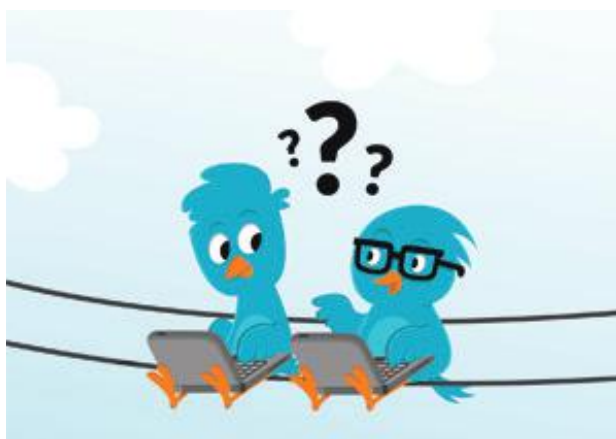


The word “tweet” may sound silly, but the results of tweeting are not. Millions of users on Twitter tweet updates everyday including celebrities, media outlets, businesses, and musicians – They’re all part of the mix. Using Twitter is fun, easy, and it may take a few tries to get your message into 140 characters, but you’ll pick up some tricks along the way (like using Bitly.com to shorten your links!). Twitter is meant to be updated daily, so if you aren’t active, it’s harder to gain followers and create a presence. Writing quick tweets and @ mentions to customers is as simple as saying thank you for a recent order or sharing a link to an article you thought was a good read. Twitter is conversational, so as long as you have something to say, you’re golden!



Twitter is a popular microblogging platform where users share short status updates including links to webpages, photos and articles. Twitter is a great way for smaller businesses to build a following, announce news or promotions and respond to customer questions, or even complaints. Being succinct in your tweeting is absolutely essential on this platform. Say what you need to say in as few words and characters as possible.

## Who's on Twitter?



According to a 2012 poll by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 15 percent of Americans who use the Internet are on Twitter, and eight percent tweet daily. Additionally, those in urban and suburban areas are more likely to use Twitter than their rural counterparts.

Those groups aren't the only folks on Twitter, though. Mothers, young professionals, media outlets and more all have a strong presence on the platform. Twitter attracts small businesses who want to reach clients through the fast-moving platform. For instance, [The Cupcake Truck](#)



of New Haven, CT, a mobile cupcake-selling food truck, announces their location daily via their @cupcaketruck Twitter account.

## The Value of Tweeting for Your Business



So, what can your business get out of a Twitter presence? Twitter allows you to connect on a personal level with potential and existing customers. As a small business, this is an incredible asset as you become a company your customers know and trust. Because you can quickly respond to customers' tweets, you can build great rapport.

### Getting Started

Twitter is all about conversation and making connections with others. Thus effective tweeting begins with tweets that are interesting, informative or useful. Don't waste character space with unnecessary words or phrases, and don't bother sending out generic "Good morning!" tweets.

Instead, focus on interesting observations, links to webpages, blog posts and articles (with a brief description beforehand) and responding to others with useful insight.



## Twitter Terms:

**Tweet** – A 140-character message sent out by a Twitter user. All tweets are limited to 140 characters – including hashtags, links and mentions.

**Hashtag (#)** – A hashtag is a subject or topic mentioned in a tweet and indicated by a # mark. For instance, for Disney-related tweets, the hashtag might be #Disney and appear in or at the end of a tweet.

**At (@)** – The @ sign appears before a user's name in a mention on Twitter. For instance, if you want to mention your friend (with a Twitter account), you'd use. @TWITTERNAME in your tweet (replacing TWITTERNAME with their handle.)

**Avatar** – The small picture that accompanies tweets. For people, this is usually a headshot. For businesses, a headshot or logo could be used.

**Connect** – This tab at the top of the Twitter page takes you to where you can view your mentions (@s), messages and more. It shows you who has interacted with you and how.

**Direct Message (DM)** – A private message sent between two Twitter users who follow each other on Twitter. Other users cannot see this.

**Follow** – When you follow someone, their status updates appear in your Twitter stream. Likewise when folks follow you, your updates appear in their Twitter stream.

**Handle** – An individual's Twitter name.

**Mention** – See At (@).





## When crafting posts, think about these two important things:

- Focus on value, conversation and ease of use. If you are trying to point out a really cool blog post mentioning your business, link directly to it – don't send them to it in a roundabout way. The more clicks it takes to get somewhere, the less likely the follower will actually see it.
- Write tweets that get people's attention — in a good way. Tweets with too many hashtags or only links look like spam and lead to “unfollows,” lack of engagement and being ignored.

## Retweeting 101

A retweet is sending a tweet from another Twitter user to your followers. This allows you to share the love – making sure that your followers see interesting or informative tweets from others. Retweets should be interesting and relevant, just like your own messages. Be sure to maintain a balance—too many retweets can seem spammy.

Because retweeting is effectively supporting someone else's words, be sure that you can get behind what they are saying as well. If you don't agree, it's probably best not to retweet it.

## Engagement on Twitter

This is so important to remember: Twitter is about conversation and community. In order to be part of the conversation, you have to participate through following and interacting with your customers, potential customers and those interested in your business.







Building your audience is a two-fold task. First, you need to follow others – this populates your Twitter stream with tweets. Be sure to follow individuals in your field and other businesses in your physical and professional community. Each of these will have shared interests with you.

By following others, you will see others begin to follow you back. This is a good starting point for building your audience. However, if you want to be a Twitter success your reach has to extend beyond that group.

Once you've built a following, the number of people you follow shouldn't exceed the number who follow you. Also, while it's important for you to follow others, it's not necessary to follow everyone (but you can, if you want to). For a more curated list, follow only those who interest you the most. But a hint: your list of followers should be substantial – even if it isn't nearly as long as the list of those who follow you. (This ratio should even out as you gain a following.)



One great way to reach more followers is through the use of hashtags. When someone searches for tweets with a specific hashtag, they find information relating to subjects they are interested in and can follow the Twitter users who send those relevant tweets.

## Hashtag Use 101

Using hashtags is an easy and simple way to have your posts seen by many users. However, you need to be smart – and conservative – with your hashtag usage. How?

- 1. Choosing Hashtags** – Only hashtag a tweet if it truly relates to the topic of the hashtag. For instance, if you make an observation about a television show, you might hashtag it with the name of the show or a popular abbreviation. If you tweet about a new product for use in kindergarten classrooms however, you'd want to hashtag it with popular education hashtags like #edchat or #kindergarten.
- 2. How Many Hashtags?** – When hashtagging, limit yourself to no more than three hashtags per tweet – and vary the number you use per tweet. Using more threatens to make your tweet look more like one long link rather than an interesting and useful statement.
- 3. Avoid Hashtag Spam** – Let's say you find a Twitter party hosted by a brand whose users are similar to your demographic and you think, "Hey, if I tweet them, I can reach all those people." While it's okay to join the party, tossing the party hashtag on an unrelated tweet is Twitter spam and will garner you a bad reputation among other Twitter users.





## 9 Things You Should Know about Hashtags:

1. Hashtags should pertain to the topic of your tweet.
2. Don't overuse hashtags – it looks spammy.
3. Limit your hashtags to 2-3 per tweet.
4. Using hashtags can help you connect your business to others with similar interests.
5. Anyone can create a hashtag at any time.
6. Hashtags are searchable on Twitter, helping people find interesting tweets and users.
7. Clicking on a hashtag brings up all the recent tweets that used that hashtag.
8. Hashtags can be used to tie together posts in a Twitter party or chat.
9. Hijacking a hashtag with an unrelated tweet is bad form.



## Being an Active Participant

Tweeting doesn't have a one-size-fits-all approach. To be a good and active participant, you have to mix up the types of tweets you send – including links, statements, RTs and interactions. Sending too many of one can make your Twitter stream less interesting. And sending only links and RTs lacks the authenticity of voice Twitter users find most valuable about the platform.

### Twitter Success Spotlight: The Hop Ice Cream Cafe in Asheville, North Carolina



The Hop Ice Cream Café in Asheville, NC, is a popular spot that is active on social media. Greg Garrison, owner of The Hop, says that the business has been on Twitter since December 2009. An employee of a neighboring establishment suggested it, and Garrison and his wife decided to give it a try. They haven't looked back since.



## On Twitter

The Hop's Twitter account ([@hopicream](https://twitter.com/hopicream)) includes a variety of tweets that promote local events and businesses, respond to others and things that are happening at the business – like new ice cream flavors.

“It's been amazing. We've taken orders – several orders – on Twitter. We've been asked to scoop at events by people who we haven't yet met,” says Garrison. “Twitter is kind of like a high school cafeteria. There are always people fulfilling all sorts of roles.”

Garrison sees his business's role on Twitter as that of a helper. “[I] try and help out as many of our fellow local businesses as we can,” says Garrison. “Spread the love, without ever expecting anything in return.”

One of Garrison's key strategies on Twitter? Responding to every mention. “I am quick to respond. Communication happens a lot from the customers as well. They'll say ‘I'm at The Hop’ and I will say thanks for stopping in,” says Garrison.

## Twitter Management in a Jiffy

Scheduling tweets: Through third-party applications, you can schedule tweets in advance. This can be helpful for spreading the word about certain promotions or upcoming events. However, since interaction is key to Twitter, you need to also respond in real-time and cannot rely on scheduled tweets to manage your account. Furthermore, it is important to stop scheduled tweets in times of crisis or you may risk appearing insensitive to others.



**Setting limits:** It's easy to spend a lot of time on Twitter. However, you can't let it take over your day. Instead, limit yourself to a few short check-ins as often as you choose. You can also set up alerts for when you are mentioned, which makes it easier to passively monitor your account without constantly being present.

**Planning techniques:** When you know a special promotion or season is coming, you can plan ahead for some tweets. But since active response matters on Twitter, stay alert and engaged to make sure you appear authentic, not canned or pre-written.

## Twitter Advertising

Twitter now offers advertising options for business users. Twitter advertising can build your fan base and engagement – though it may not be as effective as organic community building. It should also be noted that Twitter advertising can be expensive.



**Promoted Tweets** – With this option, you pay to get your tweet in front of more eyes. It stays at the top of the Twitter stream (unless the Twitter user chooses to minimize it). It's a way to have your tweets reach a larger audience.

**Promoted Trends** – Want your hashtag to be a trending topic? While that can happen organically, you can pay to have your hashtag appear at the top of the trends list. This can get more folks interested in, or participating in, the topic you're tweeting about.

**Promoted Accounts** – Looking for more followers? This option puts your Twitter handle into users' "Who to Follow" box. It's essentially buying followers – but Twitter's algorithms mean that you'll be shown to users who are more likely to be interested in what you have to say.

## Get Involved: Twitter Chats

Many industries and companies hold Twitter chats, which are regular discussions linked with a hashtag and held on certain dates and times (for instance, Monday from 7-8 p.m.). This is another good way to reach more people. Participate, share your knowledge and learn from others.

**Do it:** There are literally chats for every interest. The best way to learn more about chats is to try attending one. One of interest to you could be the weekly Small Business Chat. The details: #Smallbizchat – Wednesdays, 8-9 pm, EST – The discussion focuses on small businesses and lets owners come together and ask questions.



## 10 Twitter Mistakes to Avoid

- 1. Not having an avatar** – This is a rookie move that will make people distrustful of anything you say.
- 2. Not including your website URL on your profile** – You want people to find your business beyond Twitter, don't you?
- 3. Tweeting irregularly** – Regular tweeting keeps you relevant.
- 4. Only tweeting links to your website** – No one likes a braggart.
- 5. Using too many hashtags** – It looks spammy and people won't pay attention.
- 6. Not using hashtags** – You're missing the opportunity to broaden your reach!
- 7. Not following anyone** – Twitter is about the conversation. You have to be a part of the conversation.
- 8. Not replying to @ mentions** – This is like being at a cocktail party and ignoring those who want to talk to you.
- 9. Having a private Twitter account** – If your account is private, people can't see your tweets unless you allow them to follow you. You're a business. You should want people to see and interact with you.
- 10. Tweeting unkind or rude thoughts** – Really, no one should do this. But especially not from your business's.





# Chapter 3

## Google+

Much like Facebook, [Google+](#) allows you to post announcements and company news, but one major added benefit to using Google+ is that it can increase your search engine results just by using it. And, the more you use Google+, the more likely you'll increase your company's website search results. Google+ also specializes in multimedia and sharing tools. For example, [Google+ Hangouts](#) is a tool you can use to host, stream, broadcast and record video chats. Need to have a meeting or a call with a few team members and a client? Want to invite current or potential customers to chat about a new product or service? You can do that through Google+ Hangouts. Jump in there and use all that Google+ has to offer!



## What is Google+?

Google created and launched its own social network in 2011 called [Google+](#).

Aside from being “just another social media platform,” Google+ also integrates Google products, services and search engine features all into one easy-to-navigate page. As a business, you can create a Google+ Page and build a community around it. This not only gives you the benefit of connecting your business with potential customers, but also boosts your website’s placement in Google-powered search engine results.

## Why Google+ Matters

It’s no secret that Google is the most popular search engine on the web. In fact, the term “Google” has gone from a company’s name and product, to a verb used to describe the act of searching on the internet. When someone “Googles” your business, you want them to find you easily, right? Using Google’s products to boost your search results, and increase your sphere of influence, is an effective way to do just that.

Rumor has it that websites with verified Google+ Business Pages get some good search engine karma from Google. Google+ content indexes well with Google’s search robots, so websites that post often appear higher in search results. Active use of Google + can lead more potential customers to you – Good news!

## What You Can Do with Google+

Like other social networks, Google+ allows members to connect and share text, photos and links. But Google+ also offers some unique opportunities to connect via video chat, multimedia content and more.



### On Google+ you can:

- Create “**Circles**” of people and companies that your business interacts with – such as customers, vendors and partners.
- Schedule and host video chats via **Google Hangouts**.
- Post photos, videos, links and statuses – either to the public or to specific Circles in your network.
- Create and participate in interest groups.

### Quick Glance Google+ Glossary

**Circle:** An organization system for the people and Pages you follow. This allows you to create targeted lists of your audience so that the right updates go to the right folks and brands.

**+1:** The Google+ equivalent of Liking something on Facebook. By clicking the +1 icon on a Page or post, a user is saying, “This is good – I like it!”

**Tag:** To mention a person or Page in a post. This is done by putting a “+” before the name of the person or Page in a status update. The person or Page will receive a notification on Google+ when you do this and may receive an email, depending on the settings of their account.

**Hashtag:** A Word or phrase (without spaces) that is preceded by the # symbol. Hashtags are used to keep related content grouped so that those interested in a certain subject can easily locate it.

**Hangout:** A video chat between up to 10 Google+ users. These can be streamed live for more folks to watch, and the video can be saved to YouTube.



## Should Your Biz Be on Google+?

Yes! Though it might feel like juggling yet another social network, this is not one to miss. Because of the search engine benefits and the Google connection, being on Google+ is necessary for your business. It's also easy.

The screenshot shows a Google+ Local listing for 'The Blue Light' restaurant. The header includes the Google+ logo, a search bar with the text 'Search for restaurants, hotels, and more', and a location filter set to 'San Francisco, CA'. The listing itself features a profile picture, a grid of photos showing the restaurant's interior and staff, and a 'Write a review' button. Below the photos, there are tabs for 'About' and 'Photos'. The 'About' section provides the address (1979 Union Street, San Francisco, CA 94123), phone number ((415) 922-5510), and website (thebluelightsf.com). It also includes a quote from the owner: 'Since 1992 we have served the best Quality Bar Food & Beer! We are the #1 Bar in San Francisco! We a very friendly Neighborhood Bar. Come give us a try we are sure to please!'. A review score of 18 is displayed, along with 120 reviews and a 'Scoring guide' link. A 'At a glance' section lists 'taco tuesdays · great margaritas · great bartenders · chicken tacos · marina'. A map shows the location at the intersection of Union St and Buchanan St. The listing also includes a 'Directions' button and a '74 Reviews from everyone and 46 scores without reviews' summary.

If you're a small brick-and-mortar business, claim your [Google+ Local listing](#), which is a business listing with Zagat information that is automatically created by Google.

Convinced? Then it's time to tap into the power and benefits of Google+.



## Getting Started

To join Google+ as a business, you must first join as an individual using a Gmail account. Start by creating your Google+ personal profile, then you can use that to set up your Google+ Business Page and claim your Google+ Local listing.

### *Creating a Google+ Page for Your Business*

- Click on the “More” link at the bottom of the left sidebar to find the Pages section.
- Click “Create New Page.”
- Choose the category that fits your business.
- Fill in the necessary information.
- Upload your logo, and a cover photo if you have one.
- Start posting.

Make sure to add the Google+ chicklet (widget) to all pages of your website or blog so that those who come to your site can +1 your pages and share them with their networks.



## What's Google+ Local?



When Google users search for your business, a Google+ Page comes up containing location, hours and other information – and if you've claimed that Page, you can revise the information and make changes. "I think one of the most overlooked areas of optimization for a small business are their local results. Many small businesses are local in nature, so optimizing their Google+ Local Page [is] very important," says John E. Turner of Postali.com. "Often times people don't even claim these listings, leaving it up to everyone else to decide what is being reported about their business. Local optimization is not the same as traditional search engine optimization, so make sure you get out there and claim, complete and optimize all of your business listings."



## Effective Use of Google+

Because Google+ is a more robust service, it takes a little more effort than other social networks to set up and run. As you follow people and other companies for your business, you'll want to add them to Circles so that you can keep your contacts organized. For instance, you may want to create a Circle for local customers and another for online customers. You may also want to create a Circle for vendors or businesses with whom you'd like to work.



By organizing those you follow into Circles, you have the ability to tailor what content goes to each group, increasing the effectiveness of everything you do.

When folks in your Circles follow you back and you send updates to the Circle they're in, an option appears at the bottom of the update box that says "Also send email to CIRCLE NAME." If you check this, then everyone



in that Circle will receive an email about your update. Sounds good, right? Not always. Use this feature sparingly so only your most newsworthy or important posts send an email

## Creating Share-Worthy Content on Google+

Twitter is for conversations. Facebook is for community building. Google+ is for information. Think of it as the classroom or manual of social media sites—and treat your postings as such.

What should you be sharing? You'll want to share new content from your website so that the links get that search engine boost from being mentioned on Google+, but that's not all. Google+ is the perfect place to post tips, brief how-to items and articles that are more relevant to your business. The more useful the post, the more likely it'll be commented on or shared. Basically, you want to inform and enlighten your audience by being an expert in your field.

## How Often to Post

While there are lots of people and businesses signed up on Google+, not many are regularly participating. Do you know what that means? More opportunity for you!

Since there is so much opportunity to make a name for yourself and your business on Google+, you should try to post at least once a day—if not a few times each day. Also, if you're mentioning a specific person or business, tag them in your posts by putting a "+" and type their name. A list will come up, and you can click the right person to add. Interacting with other users sparks engagement with your followers.





## Engagement on Google+

Your Google+ presence is only as strong as your engagement with other Google+ users. Why? Because the more your posts get liked, commented on and shared, the more powerful they become in Googleland. But how do you get seen, heard and shared?

You have to build your community—that means adding folks and businesses of interest to your Circles, interacting with them and keeping your fingers crossed they follow you back. You can also add a Google+ link to your website or blog so that fans can easily find and follow you.

## Encouraging G+ Sharing



The more your Page and posts are shared on Google+, the more valuable your Google+ account becomes. That's important for the search engine aspect of things. Encourage your followers to interact and share whatever you're posting by keeping your statuses, photos and videos information-rich and interesting.



## Who Are You trying to Reach?

You'll want to connect with influencers. Tag them in your posts, when appropriate, comment on their posts as your business, and add them to your Circles.

## Hashtags on Google+

A hashtag is a keyword or keyphrase (without spaces) that is preceded by the # sign. This transforms the word into a hyperlink that groups the status or post with others using the same hashtag. When you type # into the status box on Google+, it'll automatically generate suggestions as you type, allowing you to see potential hashtags to choose from.



## Dos and Don'ts of Hashtagging

**Do:** hashtag all your Google+ posts.

**Don't:** just post a link and include tons of hashtags (spam alert!).

**Do:** use various hashtags to capture several themes within the post.





**2. Read and respond to other posts.** This is where organized Circles come in handy. You can select whose updates to see using your Circles, rather than viewing everyone's posts simultaneously. This also lets you target posts for specific segments of your audience.

**3. Respond and share.** When someone tags you in a post, respond. When you see something that's a great fit for your own audience, share it. These are the things that will take your Google+ posting from talking at people to talking with people—a good thing for your business.

### ***Automating Google+ Updates (yes, it's possible)***



There isn't yet the breadth of options for automating Google+ that other social networks have, but that doesn't mean it's not possible. It is! If you use the Chrome browser, you can download the Do Share plugin and schedule some of your posts in advance. However, it's important to remember that some degree of management does need to be handled manually—especially since responding to others is such an important part of Google+ management.

When you follow the tips in this guide, you should be on your way to Google+ success. Simply posting new and interesting info, effectively using hashtags and conversing with people is all it takes to make an impact on this social network. With a small investment of time, you too can build up your business profile for the search engine giant, resulting in more customers – always +1 in our book!



# Chapter 4

## Pinterest

Looking to increase traffic to your website? Pinterest is a must, especially if you're a business looking for new customers. Pinterest has business-specific pages and it allows you to pin everything from product photos, to services you offer with pricing, and fun or informative content. Pinterest is all about visuals - You can create boards with themes, or organize boards into projects. Whatever you decide to do, remember to keep the content interesting and engaging (and don't forget to have fun)!



## 5 Steps to Getting Started on Pinterest

You may be wondering how pinning pretty pictures on a virtual board can help you grow your business?

With 11 million users and counting, Pinterest is the third most popular social media site in the U.S, according to Mashable. It's also right behind Twitter and more popular than Google + in driving website referral traffic.

### Who's on *Pinterest?*

80% female  
but with more &  
more male users

Age: 25-55

Salary:  
\$50,000+

And website visitors means more opportunities to convert prospects into paying customers. Plus, with the addition of Pinterest business-specific accounts, this ought to tell you there's a heck of a lot more on the site than felting techniques and bridal eye candy.



Bottom line, it's time to give Pinterest (for your business) a serious whirl.

## 1. Create your Pinterest business account

To create a free Pinterest business account, go to [business.pinterest.com](https://business.pinterest.com). (You can also convert your Pinterest personal account to a business account).

Choose a business category, enter your business name and website URL.

Filling out the “About” section of your profile is key. Make it inspiring and thoughtful. Use keywords your ideal customer would use in a search. For example: Marin County native plant landscaping or native plant landscaper in Marin; or Mac repair in Grand Haven, PC repair in Grand Haven, etc.

Now, upload your logo or a pic of yourself. For ideal results, use a square image that's at least 165x165 pixels.

Next, verify your website so that people see the full URL on your profile and in search results.

When you log into your account for the first time, you'll be asked to choose five boards to follow. Choose categories and boards that relate to your business and interests. These are fellow pinners and potential followers.

***It's all about building your Pinterest tribe—and your business.***





## 2. Pin to turn followers into customers

The cool thing about Pinterest is that your boards are what you make them. Create a board for any topic, categorize it and give it a cool name.

Install the Pin It bookmarklet (get it at <https://pinterest.com/about/goodies/>) onto your browser. This button lets you quickly pin content from your site and other sites directly into your boards. You can also pin images from your computer, by clicking “Add” on the top-right toolbar on Pinterest, and follow the instructions.

### *What to pin, what to pin...*

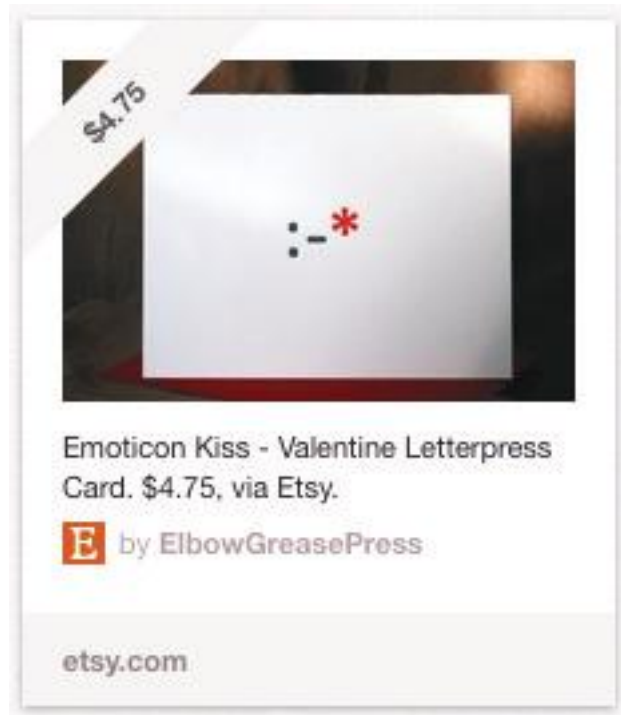
If there's a rule of thumb for what to pin it's this: Make your pins fun, inspiring and informative. (Jpg, png, and gif files only, though).

### *Try this:*

- **Pin product images.** If you offer a service, pin pictures of people using your service. Include a call to action, i.e., “Learn how to do this.” Pins with a call to action have an 80% higher engagement rate!
- **Pin or repin.** This is when you share pins from boards you follow which includes relevant third-party content, not just your own.
- **Be trendy.** Pins relating to trending topics on Pinterest have a 92% click-through rate. Search Pinterest's “Popular” category and tailor your pins according to the hottest trends. Also pin random stuff you just think is cool!



- **Price your pins.** Don't hold back; pins that include prices (for products or services) get 36% more likes. And, if you mention the price in your pin description, Pinterest automatically generates a price banner.



- **Have a contest.** Create a “Pin it to Win it” contest that challenges entrants to create boards around themes that relate to your business (have them pin products from your own site as well). Are you a top bridal consultant? Conducting a “Dream Wedding Pin It To Win It” contest might do the trick to promote your top package. Check out [pinterest.com/pinchat/contests-on-pinterest/](https://pinterest.com/pinchat/contests-on-pinterest/) for tons of Pinterest contest ideas.



- **Be a resource.** Do it yourself (DIY) and tutorial pins have a 42% higher click-through. If you have how-tos, instructional tutorials, or DIY content on your site, blog, or YouTube channel, pin it!

### ***Repins are where rubber meets the road.***

When Pinterest users re-pin your images to their own boards, or “like” your pins, your business and brand start to make a real mark.

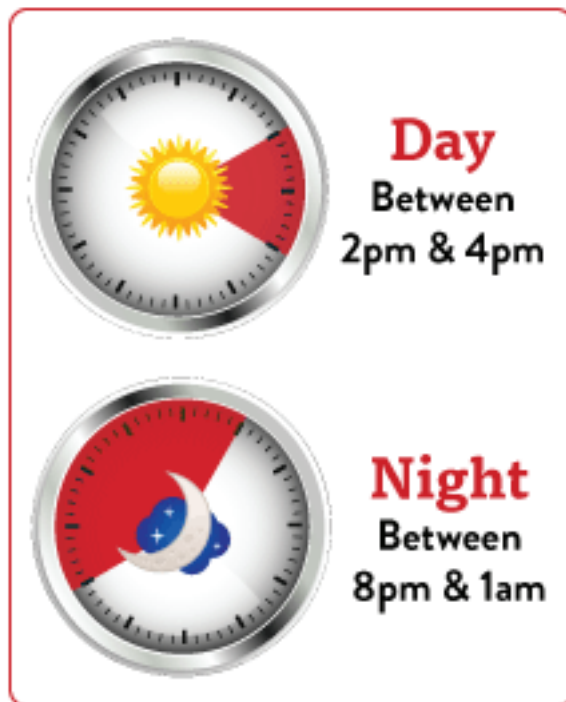
Pinterest is made up of 80% re-pins compared to Twitter’s 1.4% in re-tweets. So, before you decide what to pin, consider what’s most re-pinnable.

## **3. Follow the rules of the pinning game**

- **Be real and be inspiring.** Pinterest is an expression of you and your business. Don’t be afraid to show your personal side. Pin your passions and interests along with the business stuff.
- **Link pins back to their original source.** The “Pin It” button automatically grabs an image’s source link, crediting the original publisher. If you repin something from another board, click the pin to make sure it links back to a legitimate website. If not, report it or leave a comment.
- **Pin in a timely fashion.** Conventional wisdom says to pin between 2-4 pm or between 8 pm-1am (perfect if you tend to burn the midnight oil). Bit.ly, the URL shortening company, swears by the success of Saturday morning pins. Experiment with your own pinning timeframes. Use the [Pingraphy bookmarklet](#) to grab images and schedule your pins during different times.



## Best Time to Pin



- **Build your brand with your words.** Write concise and conversational pin descriptions. And, use humor—researchers say it boosts learning and info-recall.
- **Pin on popular boards (if they're open to everyone).** These boards tend to have high subscriber numbers, and will expand the reach of your brand.

## 4. Show us the SEO love

Search engines love unique content. Pinterest, with its massive following and original content, is the place to practice good search engine optimization (SEO).



- **Use the Pin It button** (get it at [pinterest.com/about/goodies](https://pinterest.com/about/goodies)). The Pin It button is a must-have for your website or blog. It lets people share your content on their Pinterest boards, linking their followers back to your site.



- **Build backlinks** into your pins to boost your SEO rankings. Backlinks occur from links included in captions and other info on your Pinterest posts.
- **Use keywords** in your “About” profile, content and pins to help increase your Pinterest page rank when your prospects search.
- **Build community.** If someone follows you, follow them back. Comment on, like, and repin their images. This will encourage them to like you back. The bigger and more active your Pinterest community, the more exposure for your biz.
- **Integrate.** Add Pinterest social sharing buttons to your blog, email campaigns and/or website. Ask Facebook, Google+, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn fans to follow you on Pinterest. Tweet your pins and share them on Facebook.





## Wrap Up

It's time to dive in and make a splash! To begin, pick one or two of the discussed platforms and set up an account. Jot down some ideas or topics you want to post about online. This could be anything from upcoming specials on products, a membership program you're launching, a big event coming up, or photos of happy customers. After you've got some ideas, start adding content to your profiles. You'll want to have a nice profile/company photo to use (or multiple ones), and an interesting, but short description of your company and services including links. Fill out each area of your profile until you're satisfied with the way it looks and flows.

Once you've got the swag to back it up, start posting, tweeting and/or pinning. Suggest your page/profile to friends on Facebook, follow clients or other businesses on Twitter, and put important users in your Google+ circles. Once you begin updating your social media sites regularly, you'll find that building an audience and a following will come. The more people or pages you tag and users you tweet, the quicker you'll become visible to others. Posting engaging and resourceful information is more likely to gain new customers for your business. Don't be afraid to be bold; if you're a small business, give your followers a glimpse into your daily operations by posting office photos or by telling others about a recent goal you met. If you establish a connection with your followers, you can turn that connection into a sale.

Using social media will boost brand awareness, help generate more sales, recruit new clients, and assist in retaining customers. You'll see all the possibilities available at your fingertips, and we encourage you to use them!



Check us out on:



## What's Skadeedle?

Skadeedle is the coolest site for all your small biz marketing – yep, all of it! We offer tons of tools, how-tos, advice from the pros and heaps more to ramp up your small biz mojo. We give you the scoop on the latest and greatest in marketing, social media and technology and how to apply them to your business, so you can focus on what you do best: growing your company!

**Get the scoop by email!** Join over 12,000 of those in the know and get helpful tools, how-tos & advice from the pros - right here, right now.

