



**THE BEGINNERS GUIDE TO
MARKETING ON
SOCIAL NETWORKS**

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FOREWORD

In April 2008 I did something that would change my life, although I didn't know it at the time. I joined Twitter. I saw nothing "life-changing" about it back then and frankly I thought it was a silly place (to quote Monty Python).

I dabbled for eight months, not really trying but somehow getting to 1,200 followers. Then, January 1, 2009, I decided to give Twitter 30 days to convince me to stay or that was it. I planned on living on Twitter for the month and if it didn't do much for me, I was walking away. So I tweeted, and tweeted, and tweeted. From in bed in the morning to the same spot at night. I tweeted almost 7,000 times. But it isn't the 7,000 that is the important number, it's the fact that 75% of those tweets were replies. Twitter is a conversation, not a dictation.

That's when I "got it." Social media is like a community in person. If you're not there, you don't understand the worth. You have to be there and give to it, something I call social currency, before you try to take.

I went from 1,200 followers to 10,000 at the end of the month and never looked back. My 30 days living on Twitter turned into almost five years now. I can trace back some of my best friends back to Twitter and practically all of my revenue in one way or another. We'll get to ROI in a minute.

The reason I didn't "get" Twitter in those first eight months is the same I see from people all the time today. People want the results from social media without the effort. They seek out automation, scheduling, one-click and post to all networks, when in reality that doesn't help the community.

If you want to be successful in social media, pick one platform and start being social. Focus is the endangered species of social media. Since you're reading the beginners guide to social media, you need to begin somewhere. Don't read this fine report from my friends at AWeber and open accounts on all the platforms. Pick one and focus.

Only you can calculate the ROI of what you're doing. I didn't join Twitter for an ROI, I did it to find a virtual water cooler of entrepreneurs so I could expand my mind and support system. The funny thing is, my ROI has been exponential because I don't try to sell. People do business with people they know, like and trust. What better way to build that than being social with each other? :)

Good luck on your journey, and if the road brings you by my place, stop by and say hi:

www.Twitter.com/UnMarketing

www.Facebook.com/UnMarketing

I have other profiles, but, you know, focus. :)

Scott Stratten

UnMarketing

Facebook

Ask someone what the most popular social network is. They'll probably say Facebook. With over a billion monthly active users and 13 million local business pages, Facebook has some proven marketing power.

HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR PAGE

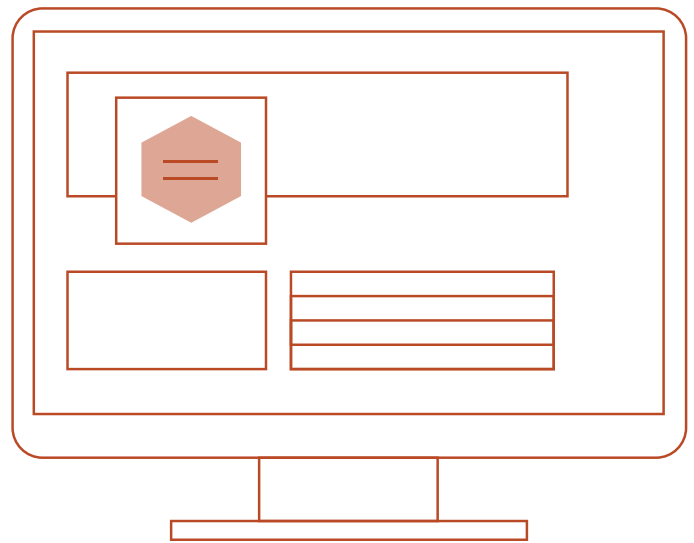
First, you need to [create a page for your business](#). Fill in your basic information - business name, address, website and a short write-up about your business. Once you're all set up, people on Facebook can "Like" your page to follow your updates.

Next, your posts need to reach your audience - the people who "Like" your page. Facebook uses its own algorithm to decide when to display your content in your followers' news feeds.

Your posts' visibility depends on how your audience interacts with what you post. The more people "Like" and comment on your posts, the more visible you'll be in their feeds.

Visual content does remarkably well getting people to interact - [photos get twice as many "likes"](#) as a brand's status update does.

Posting photos, asking questions and running contests are all great ways to get more people interacting with your business's Facebook page.



AT A GLANCE

Over 1 billion monthly active users

52% of people in the US have a Facebook account

Most Facebook users are between 25 - 34 years old

70% of small businesses in the US have a Facebook page

TOOLS TO EXTEND YOUR REACH FOR FREE / CHEAP

When it comes to getting more people to “Like” your page - or at least find your page - Facebook has some handy tools to help you do that either for free or at a low cost:

OFFERS

Offers are sales, discounts, coupons or other specials you can offer on your page. When one of your followers claims your offer, it posts to their personal Timeline and automatically shares in their friends’ news feeds. Offers [have a viral nature](#) and can expose your page to wider networks of your followers’ friends.

Cost: \$5 minimum | [Set up an Offer](#)

SOCIAL PLUGINS

You’ve probably seen these around the Internet - the “Like” and “Share This” buttons on articles and websites. When a visitor “likes” content on your website, it publishes in their news feed for all their friends to see. People who reach your site through articles liked and shared by their friends tend to spend 50% more time reading your content and click through to twice as many pages on your site.

Cost: Free! | [Install on your site](#)

FACEBOOK AND EMAIL

Two free apps can connect AWeber to your Facebook page to help you turn your fans into email subscribers. [Learn more about how Facebook and email can work together.](#)

Twitter

Twitter is a “here and now” kind of network. The stream moves so quickly that time-sensitive, need-to-know-now information is often the most valued. Twitter is perfect for real-time marketing during events and instant communication with your customers and followers.

HOW TO USE TWITTER FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Twitter isn't a place for just posting links to your website. Twitter is a place where real time conversations and connections with your customers can happen. Indie music artist [Amanda Palmer](#) has used Twitter to secure obscure props a few hours before show time, find last-minute lodging on tour and connect with her fans one-on-one.

Twitter limits your posts to 140 characters or less, which lends a sense of immediacy to your tweets.



What should you tweet about? Announcements are a good place to start - think last-minute sales, a new service feature or a brand new item added to your shop that you know your customers would die for.

Links and photos also tend to [get a lot of response](#) on Twitter. Tweet behind-the-scenes peeks at your business or photos from events you're attending or hosting. Link to fun, informative articles you know your audience will appreciate.

Because of Twitter's instant connection feel, many businesses also use Twitter for customer support. Make sure to address and questions, complaints or compliments you get in a timely manner to build a solid relationship with your followers.

TWITTER CRASH COURSE

Tweet directly at another user by placing the “@” symbol in front of their user name.

Putting a “#” sign in front of a word creates a hashtag. Hashtags categorize tweets and make them searchable/findable by topic.

“Retweets” help spread information virally. A “retweet” starts with “RT” and copies the original tweet verbatim.

Just like on Facebook, images do well on Twitter for engaging your audience and starting conversations.

FREE TOOL TO HELP MANAGE YOUR TWITTER ACCOUNT

Managing Twitter can take time, especially if you’re tweeting frequently and getting a lot of replies. Hootsuite is a free web-based app that makes it easier to manage your account.

You can schedule tweets in advance, see everyone who has mentioned you or direct messaged you at a glance, and even choose hashtags to follow to stay up-to-date on what’s getting talked about in your industry.

[Check out Hootsuite here](#)

SHARING YOUR NEWSLETTER ON TWITTER

AWeber has social sharing options baked right in. It’s easy to [drag-and-drop share buttons](#) into your emails so your readers can tweet your email to their friends.

You can also connect your Twitter account to AWeber and [tweet a link to your latest newsletter](#) as soon as it

Google+

Google+ is a social network created by - who else? - the well-known search engine Google.

Since it's Google's product, Google+ has deep tie-ins with search: Articles that get "+1'd" on the network rank higher in search results, and business pages display in the sidebar above AdWords in related search results.

Google+ has [the second largest user base](#), but only about half of those users actually post and contribute to the site. Still, its features and search tie-ins can make it valuable to your business.

VALUABLE GOOGLE+ FEATURES

When it comes to targeting content, Google+ makes it easy with Circles.

When a user starts following your business page, you can add that person to a special Circle if you choose.

You might create Circles for local customers, genders, age ranges or other criteria found in a user's public profile that's useful to your business. When you write a post or share a link, you can share it with all of your circles or just specific ones who would get the most out of it.

Want to reach more than the customers who already know about you? Join or set up a Google+ Community. Communities are organized around common interests - like cooking, crafting, gaming, music, movies and more. Anyone can join, and getting your business involved in a Google+ Community (especially setting one up yourself!) exposes your business to a wider network of people who are already interested in what you do.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT GOOGLE+

64% male

36% female

Largest percent of users are in the US

55% of Google+ users are actually active

WHY JOIN GOOGLE+?

The big Google+ benefit comes from search results. [This site gives a thorough overview](#) of the relationship between Google+ and search results.

Google's search engine prioritizes Google+ profiles and the +1 button can give your links better visibility if enough people vote them up. Try sharing your emails on Google+ and see if they turn up in search results!

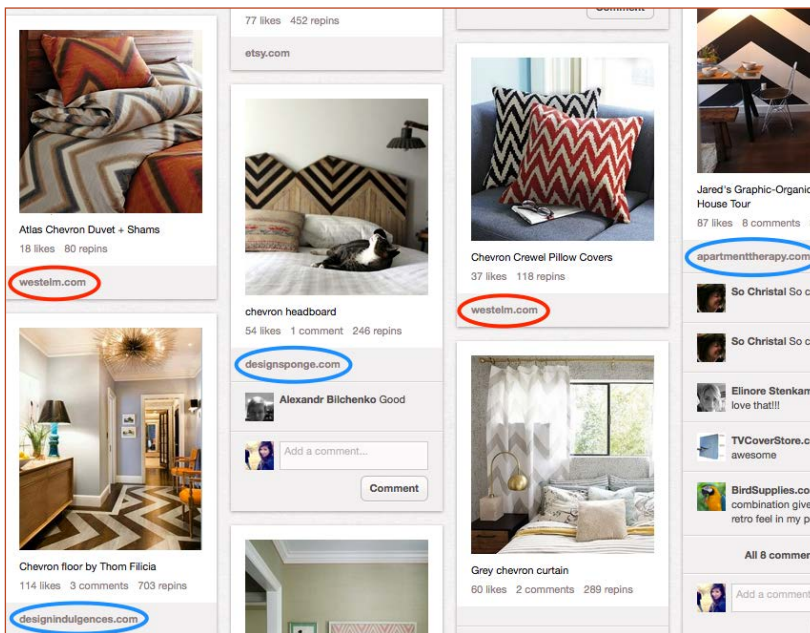
Pinterest

Pinterest is a social bookmarking site where users “pin” images to themed inspiration boards. Most Pinterest boards focus on home decorating, recipes, crafts and design.

Pinterest is especially valuable for retailers: [In a survey](#), 69% of Internet users said they purchased a product they found through Pinterest. And it’s not just retailers who can benefit - 43% of Pinterest users specifically connect with brands on the network, as opposed to only 23% of Facebook users.

HOW YOUR BUSINESS CAN USE PINTEREST

You’ll probably be tempted to pin all of your blog posts or only items from your online store on your business’s Pinterest account. Don’t do that. Pinterest is about expressing your personality through curated items and content. You can certainly include your own in the mix, but you should round it out with other fun finds across the Internet.



[West Elm](#) mixes their own items with decorating inspiration from other sites on their “[Chevron](#)” board. (Pins from West Elm’s site are circled in red, and pins from other sources are circled in blue.)

PINTEREST FOR RETAILERS

69% of Internet users purchased a product they found on Pinterest.

43% of Pinterest users connect with brands. Only 23% of Facebook users do the same.

PINTEREST & EMAIL

Pinterest can be super effective for gating content - hiding your pinned content behind an email sign up form. Designer and scrapbooking instructor Jennifer Wilson [saw her email list grow by 75%](#) because she pinned free downloads that went viral on Pinterest - and were hidden behind an email sign up on her site.

You might feel tempted to just go a head and pin a screenshot of your sign up form, but since Pinterest is all about sharing ideas and inspiration packaged in pretty visuals, pinning your sign up form is not a good idea.

YouTube & Vimeo

Video is a great way to get more exposure for your brand, especially if you have something to show off. Video can humanize your business by letting you tell your story in a fun and interesting way.

Got a product to demonstrate or features to explain? Video helps there, too, showing your customers everything they need to know.

YouTube and Vimeo are two social networks centered on video sharing.

YOUTUBE

With 1 billion users, YouTube is the place to go if you want your video to spread quickly. It's a great platform for short, instructional videos. It's even better if you want to show some personality and get in on [the Internet trend of the moment](#).

But with so many users and such a varied amount of content, you might feel a little drowned out. That's when a smaller service like Vimeo could come in handy.

YOUTUBE STATS

1 billion monthly users

100 hours of video uploaded every minute

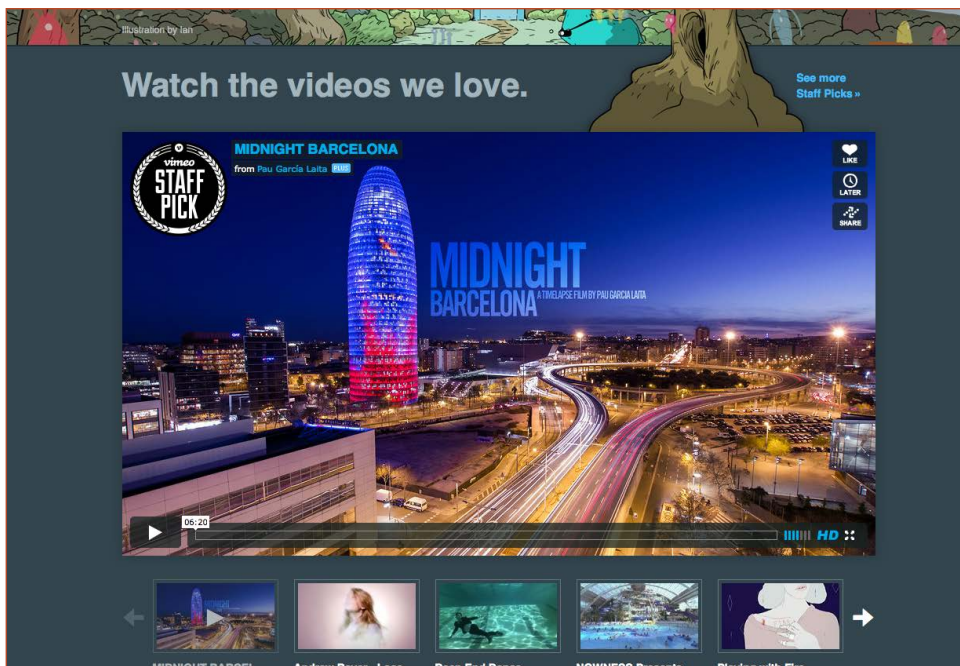
40% of video views come from mobile devices

The screenshot shows the YouTube homepage for a user named Kelsey.Paone@gmail... The interface includes a search bar, an 'Upload' button, and a 'Recommended' section with several video thumbnails. Below this is a 'SUBSCRIPTIONS' section with a list of channels to add, including Popular on YouTube, Music, Sports, Gaming, Education, Movies, TV Shows, News, Live, and Spotlight. At the bottom, there is a 'Popular on YouTube - Worldwide' section and a 'Recommended channel for you' section featuring ThomasRhettVEVO.

VIMEO

With about [18 million users](#), Vimeo is a much smaller network, but smaller can sometimes be good in terms of getting actual eyes on your video.

Founded by a group of filmmakers, the Vimeo community has a stronger emphasis on quality videos with a creative bent. If art, fashion or design, etc. is your thing or you're targeting an audience that values good production, you'll find the perfect niche on Vimeo.



VIMEO STATS

18 million monthly users

16,000 videos uploaded daily

TWITTER VINE - MARKETING WITH 6-SECOND VIDEOS?

Earlier this year, Twitter teamed up with mobile video app Vine to make it easy for people to share fun, short video clips. The catch? They're limited to 6 seconds or less.

A number of big brands have jumped on this trend already. Since all you need are an iPhone and a Twitter account, it's a free and simple way to show off aspects of your business to your followers.

Distill your company culture into 6 seconds, or give your followers a quick glimpse of the event you're hosting. You can build up anticipation with sneak peeks of upcoming products, too.

[See it in action](#)

Tumblr

While we're on the topic of visual social networks, let's look at Tumblr. It's part blogging platform, part social network - and your posts can get shared and "reblogged" all over the site, giving you interaction, reach and exposure you might not get on a different blogging site.

HOW TO USE TUMBLR FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Unlike a traditional blog, Tumblr focuses more on quick consumption - images, videos, one- or two-line inspirational quotes. If your business already has a blog, don't abandon it for Tumblr. Instead, think of Tumblr as a supplement, where you can share fun, interesting things on the fly without writing a full post about it.

It's a good idea to focus your Tumblr with a theme that expresses your brand. It can be straightforward (like quotes and pictures that represent your company culture) or something off-the-wall (your logo is red, so you start a Tumblr to curate anything and everything that's also colored red).

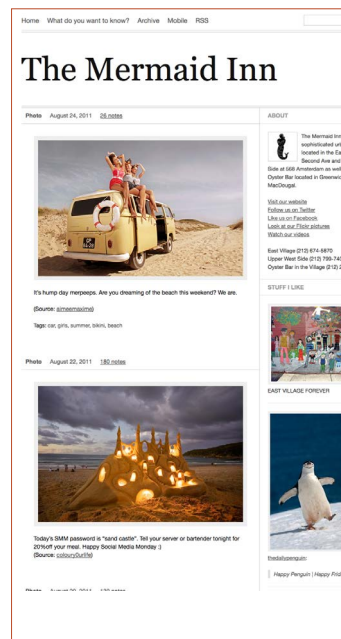
Much like Pinterest, the more visual your posts are, the more likely they are to get shared - "reblogged" - across the network. And this is another place where curation trumps creation - it's fine to promote your own products or content, but round it out with shareable bites from other sources, too.

TUMBLR USER STATS

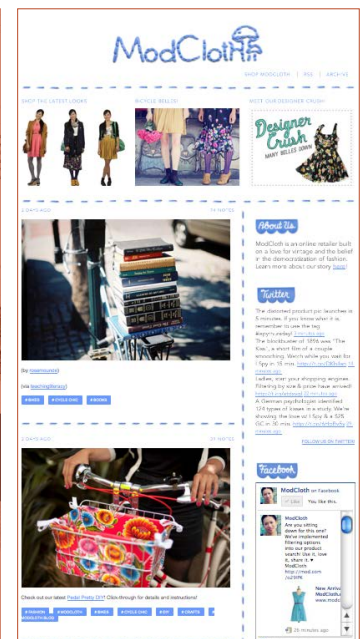
There are 163.9 million blogs on Tumblr.

Users make 98 million posts per day.

51% of Tumblr users are under 25 years old.



The Mermaid Inn has a beach-inspired theme to complement their beach-inspired name.



ModCloth showcases vintage fashion and DIYs to complement the vintage clothing lines they sell.

USING TUMBLR WITH EMAIL

Weekly Instagram round-ups [started as an email trend in 2013](#). You can do the same with images you post to Tumblr, too. Send an occasional email with updates from your recent Tumblr posts and invite your email subscribers to follow you there.

Other Sites - Are They Worth Your Time?

There are tons of social sites you might want to get involved in - or heard you should get involved in. But there's a danger in spreading yourself too thin. Here are three networks that might sound tempting but ultimately aren't as important.

INSTAGRAM



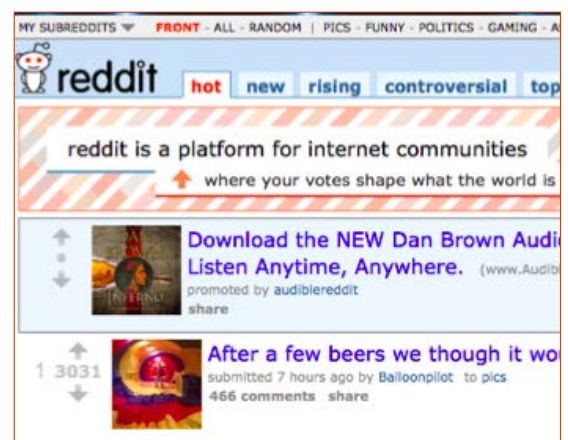
If you already use mobile photo sharing app Instagram, it doesn't hurt to use it for your business, too. Facebook purchased the company at the end of 2012, so sharing your Instagram photos on your Facebook page is simple and can keep your fans engaged with your page.

But if you're not currently on Instagram, don't rush to set up an account. Instagram used to be a closed network with the opportunity to connect with followers you wouldn't find anywhere else, but its expansion to Facebook and a new hub on the web takes away from the "exclusive" community. If you want to share photos with your customers, there are plenty of other ways to do that don't involve managing another network.

REDDIT

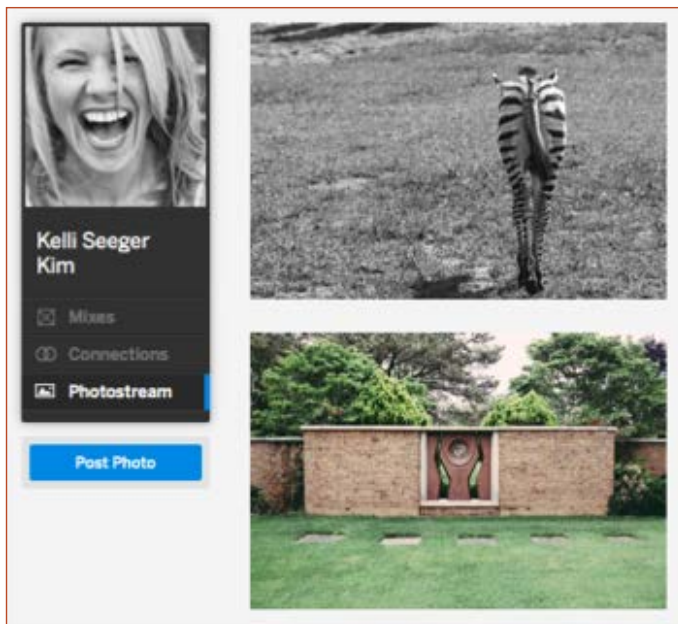
Reddit is a huge online community that shares and discusses links that any user can submit. Users can vote shared links up or down depending on whether they like the content. With enough "up" votes, a shared link can land at the very top of the front page.

Sounds like a marketing dream, right? Not quite. With about 35 million monthly users - most of whom are submitting their own links - it's incredibly easy for your content to get buried and quickly. The Reddit community is notoriously skeptical of marketers and often "downvotes" clearly promotional content to bury it completely.



Mashable mentions that Reddit [could be useful for market research](#) - anyone can open a thread and start asking pointed questions - but unless you have the time to dedicate to sifting through high volumes of responses and engaging the community in genuine conversation, it's best to skip this network.

MYSPACE



I know. Didn't Myspace pretty much die sometime around 2004 when Facebook entered the scene? But thanks to Justin Timberlake purchasing the social network, it's saw a revamp at the start of 2013. The network now focuses on connecting artists - mostly musicians and filmmakers - with their fans and sharing your media with them.

Sounds nice, but are any of your fans actually on Myspace? It's better to go to where your fans already are instead of asking them to connect with you on a social network many have abandoned in favor of bigger, better things.

Musicians might want to experiment with Myspace's new platform, but other businesses may find it better to stick where their audiences are already active.

Bonus Section: Source Help With Marketing From LinkedIn

LinkedIn helps develop business connections - whether you're looking for a job, looking to hire someone or looking to network with other businesses.

The biggest marketing value in LinkedIn is making one-on-one connections with professionals and other businesses who need your services - or one who can connect you with other individuals and organizations. LinkedIn is especially powerful for recruiting when you're ready to hire new talent for your business.

FOUR SECRETS TO LINKEDIN SUCCESS

These features of LinkedIn can help you find talent and make your business findable for professionals searching for you:

1 Secret #1 - Business Profiles

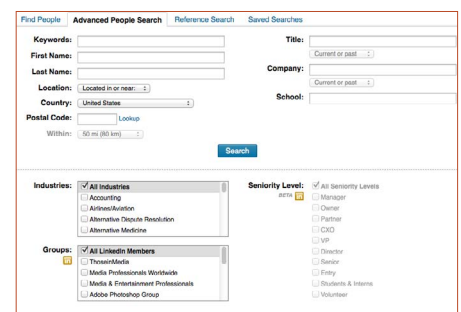
Make sure to set up a page for your business - and probably one for yourself, too. Your business page should explain what your organization is all about so professionals searching for you can tell if they'll be a good fit.

2 Secret #2 - InMail

When looking for talent to help your business, use InMail to message them - unlike Facebook, LinkedIn allows you to message anyone who's not in your network for free.

3 Secret #3 - Advanced Search

If you're trying to connect with certain talent - like, marketing help for example - use LinkedIn's advanced search feature to search for people by keywords. You can also search by job title, location, years of experience and much more criteria that you'd look for in a new employee. Make sure to use relevant keywords on your business's profile too. It makes you more easily findable to the talent that wants to connect with you.

A screenshot of the LinkedIn 'Advanced People Search' interface. The search bar is at the top with fields for 'Keywords', 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Location', 'Country', 'Postal Code', and 'Within: 50 mi (80 km)'. There are also dropdown menus for 'Title', 'Company', and 'School'. Below the search bar are two columns of filter options: 'Industries' and 'Groups' on the left, and 'Seniority Level' on the right. The 'Industries' section has 'All Industries' selected. The 'Groups' section has 'All LinkedIn Members' selected. The 'Seniority Level' section has 'All Seniority Levels' selected.

4 Secret #4 - Groups

LinkedIn's Groups can also be a good source to expand your network, get your name out there and connect with the talent you're looking for. Start your own Group or join an existing one related to your industry. Groups are great for starting conversations that can lead to valuable one-on-one connections.

In Conclusion

A few tips for delving into social networks for marketing purposes:

DON'T SPREAD YOURSELF TOO THIN

A cool, new network seems to pop up every month. But don't feel pressured to get on it right away. It's best to stick to one or two networks at the start and branch out from there if you need to. Build a fanbase on Facebook, interact with them and get to know them before branching out on the latest trend.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Social networks were built for people, not business. That's why it's so important to interact in personable ways. Answer people's questions, reply to their comments on your status updates. The more you interact, the more genuine you and your business will seem.

DON'T ABANDON OTHER MARKETING

Some people say that social is the future. But don't abandon what's working for you for the sake of trying something new. Keep your website, keep your blog, keep your email campaign, keep posting flyers around the neighborhood if that works for bringing business through your door.

Treat social media as another channel, not the only channel for your marketing.

HAVE FUN!

At its heart, social media is fun! You can be less formal here. Post pretty pictures that inspire you. Spew out stats that interest you and spark discussion. Enjoy interacting with your followers online. Building lasting connections with strangers is one of the most exhilarating parts of the Internet. Enjoy it and don't be afraid to experiment to find what works for you.

About AWeber

What do leading sites such as Social Media Examiner, Copyblogger, Which Test Won, ProBlogger and Harvard Business Review all have in common?

They rely on AWeber for easy-to-use email and social media tools to cultivate relationships with their readers. Since 1998, AWeber has been the email engine powering the growth of organizations around the world.

Today, more than 120,000 small- and midsize-businesses, entrepreneurs, agencies and nonprofits are making the most of AWeber's sophisticated segmentation and analytics capabilities, social media and testing applications, extensive template libraries, and industry-leading deliverability and live support.

For marketing advice, examples and inspiration, please join us here:



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