

Get Connected

The Newbie's Guide to the Top 5 Social Media Networks for Small Business

by Daisy-ree Quaker

Intro

Quick stats

- 62 percent on online adults are on one or more social media channels
- 50 % of these check their favorite networks first thing in the morning (around 9 a.m.)
- Social commerce sales should total \$9.2 billion by the end of 2012

As a small business owner, you need to be where your customers are. Despite your thoughts, or personal preferences, your business is affected when new technology enables others to connect but leaves your business or brand behind (53% of small business owners using social media) .The numbers speak for themselves.

**“What the market tells you is fact,
everything else is opinion.”**

In the next few pages, I cover the top 5 social media networks for business or personal use to help in guiding you with your marketing and branding efforts.



Facebook

Quick stats:

- Facebook accounts for 26% of referral traffic
- 31 percent of users check in more than once a day
- 50% of users are willing to post about products or services if they get a discount

Facebook is the big player in social media with the most users (901 million active user) and more visitors per day than any other website.

For users, it is a tool to meet new friends, join groups of similar interests, follow companies you like, post pictures, and thoughts or activities "Status Updates", and write on people's profile's, referred to as their walls, as well as send direct private messages.

It has the most features compared to the other social networks in this guide, with abilities to save albums, connect with friends, and track what people share on Facebook.

It also allows users to join groups, host events, post notes, and connect with businesses, brands, celebrities or blogs they are fans of by "liking" the business page.



Facebook for Small Business

A business can either choose to create a Fan Page, a group, or a Facebook ad.

The Fan Page is the more popular option for businesses; because of the variety of features, it can be used as an extension of the website. It allows people to fan your page, and post to your page's profile (wall). In return your business gets the awesome benefit of exposure to your fans homepage by showing images, or status updates, that they can either comment on or share this doubles your businesses chance of exposure, because it can then appear on their friends' home pages. Facebook Marketplace even allows you to sell products directly from the page.

Facebook groups are underutilized but can be useful for business looking to build a micro network of its own on Facebook. It basically works as inviting members to post to a page. The benefit of this is whenever the administrator posts, the default setting is everyone in the member list will get a notification when they log in, careful and measured use makes this useful for creating lists of regulars or enthusiasts, but regulating messages is super important because over-posting can lead to the messages feeling like spam.

The second most popular marketing tactic on Facebook is through Facebook ads. Every user's sidebar usually has about 3-4 ads depending on which page they are on. Anyone can post an ad on the sidebar, but the right wording and plan helps set apart the effective ads from the ineffective. The little things you see on the side are Facebook adverts, more on these in an upcoming post, but basically, businesses can create a Facebook ad to increase exposure, these ads can redirect users to the business fan page or website, or encourage users to like the page.

Go to:
10 great
examples of
Facebook Fan
Pages



Twitter

Quick stats:

- Approx. 200 million active users
- Twitter accounts for 3.61% of referral traffic to business websites
- Average time spent on the site is 11 minutes
- 40% of Twitter users search for products via Twitter

Twitter was launched in 2007, but has grown to 140 million active users, sending 340 million tweets every day.

Unlike Facebook, Twitter has much fewer features and its focus is micro-blogging, any first time user will notice things are much shorter and to the point on Twitter, this is because each user is only allowed a certain amount of characters to use in expressing themselves (in other words, each post or status has to get to the point).

Twitter allows you to set up a profile just like Facebook; only the point of it is to get your message across in as few words as possible. If you look at Facebook Profile's everything from your political beliefs, to marital status to high school information has a field. Whereas Twitter allows you a pretty short bio (140 characters) which forces people to really say who they are or what they are about. Tweets are basically short status updates about what's on your mind.

You can follow people, which basically means you get to see their tweets, tweet pictures, re-tweet which is basically quoting a fellow Twitter user (referred to as a Tweep). The whole hash tag thing "#" is basically a way for users to share a common topic, it's pretty similar say to writing a subject in a chat room, only in this case you can share your thoughts on a discussion at any point in time.



Twitter for Small Businesses

Small Businesses can use Twitter in so many ways: networking with other professionals, following and connecting with customers, answering customer questions or complaints, or posting news or updates to their followers and even for research or feedback on the business. In fact some big businesses have several Twitter accounts one for posting updates, another for complaints and so another for its various key figures (e.g. Dell or Zappos both have several Twitter accounts)

For a newbie, the first thing is to use the bio as a mission or vision statement., basically answer this in the 150 characters, “Why is your business on Twitter?”

Use hash tags to find people with similar interests as a networking tool, or look for competitors and follow some of their followers that show an avid interest in the subject as a marketing tool.

For its simplicity, Twitter can help you do many things, respond to customer complaints, offer solutions to questions on various topics, or promote your products. It's also a great way to show the fun side of your business by posting pictures of events or funny things going on, it is as close as it gets to your own platform to at as a spokesperson. It works best for companies that want to get their message out there using the least amount of time.

Go to:
50 ways to grow
on Twitter



LinkedIn

Quick stats:

- As of February 2012 LinkedIn has 135 million users
- Americans spend an average of 17 minutes on the site
- 50% of users have a Bachelor's degree or higher
- LinkedIn is 4X better for B2B lead generation than Facebook or Twitter

LinkedIn is like a professional version of Facebook. Users post their job related history, experience and skills, and use it to find like minded professionals by either requesting them as a connections or joining groups.

Unlike Facebook where you can pretty much send a friend request to anyone, LinkedIn restricts you from connecting with people outside your network by asking you how you know each connection whether through a company, as a personal friend, or by attending the same college, if a request meets none of these things, the site asks for the person's e-mail.

It can act as a great way to gain connections by requesting a LinkedIn introductions, which usually leads to an in-person meeting.

For Business: The various member groups are a major asset to small business owners on LinkedIn. Searching for people like-minded professionals and joining groups can offer an immense support, users frequently post questions in groups that other members can answer. LinkedIn also works best for small businesses offering B2B services using the various tools you can respond to other member's questions by talking about your services.

11 Small
business
LinkedIn Success
stories
(e-book)



Pinterest

Quick stats:

- 60% of users are women with an average household income of \$25-75k
- Most users are between the age of 18-44
- Pinterest is projected to account for 15% of social media driven purchases

Pinterest is relatively new to social media, but has risen meteorically to being the third most popular social network behind Twitter and Facebook in the US..

It is a platform for users to pin their images form around the web, and share it by pining it to their group boards or on their own board. The site allows users to connect with Facebook so that images they share are also posted to Facebook.

For Business: It is still growing in popularity but is a useful tool for businesses offering services where visuals matter, It can be used to create awareness or buzz around a business. The best uses for Pinterest is for businesses in industries such as clothing or shoe retail, or bakeries. Professionals offering services like wedding planners, or photographers also use Pinterest to advertise their services, by posting images with a watermark to allow users to track the origins down if a picture catches their interest.

Building a brand
story on Pinterest



Foursquare

Quick stats:

- 10 million people currently use Foursquare
- 3 million check-ins occur each day
- 400,000 businesses use Foursquare as a marketing tool

This location based mobile networking platform works best for businesses with a physical location. Users set up profiles and check in to the businesses that they frequent. If users have a certain number of check-ins to a specific location they earn badges e.g. becoming a Mayor. It's often used and linked to either the user's Twitter or Facebook. The business can then offer the regular's discounts or other rewards for their visits.

For Business: Foursquare can work in two ways. As a loyalty program it can allow users to earn rewards for visiting a place by giving discounts. Another way is it offers the business a free promotion because users accounts are often linked to social networking sites like Facebook, and they can share their thoughts not their visit or who they were with. This can attract people on their network to the business.

A small business
success story on
Foursquare



Google+

Quick stats:

- As of February 2012 Google+ had 90 million users
- The site accounts for 0.22% of referral traffic
- More than 70% of users are male
- Top occupation on Google plus is student

Full disclosure, I am new to Google+, I only recently joined the service so I'm still getting the hang of things.

It is basically is centered around: Connections- people in your network, by allowing you to sort into which network they fall under. People can recommend the various blog posts they see join or add your business to their circles where they can follow each post.. Hangout- allows face time video chat similar to what Skype offers, except that it can be with multiple people. Collaboration- allow users to work on documents from multiple locations, and circles lets you post specific messages to different groups of people. groups the most important feature for businesses in connecting with customers, allows a user to tailor their message to certain groups, e.g. regulars.

For Businesses: Since everyone searches on Google, it is worthwhile for your business to have a Google+ page if only to redirect users to social networks you are more active on.

The Pros and
Cons of Google
Plus for small
business



About: Daisy

Daisy Quaker is a freelance internet marketing consultant, specializing in content marketing, social media strategy, e-mail marketing and branding.

Each week she posts fresh articles on her site on strategies that can work for small business owners starting out in building an online presence for their business.

Her main focus is developing strategies that small business owners can take over and manage in their own time.

As a marketing enthusiast she believes in the power of using the right tools to managing and tracking a business's reputation. Sign up to receive posts delivered to you inbox [here](#).

“My mission is to give small businesses a chance to reach customers in ways that are practical and scalable. Internet marketing is still a struggle for many small businesses and I am here to help.”

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