



Social Media 101: A Guide for Businesses

2011 Edition - ImageWorks Studio

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What is All This “Social Media” Stuff Anyways?

Good question. So much has been going on in this space during the last few years that it’s understandably difficult to keep up. **Twitter. Facebook. Youtube. LinkedIn. StumbleUpon.**

“Social networking” this and “Web 2.0” that. It’s enough to make your head spin. We understand where you’re coming from, and that’s why we wrote this guide. More on that in a bit...

Let’s look at social media from a logical standpoint. The definitions of “social,” for our purposes, are:

- pertaining to, devoted to, or characterized by friendly companionship or relations
- seeking or enjoying the companionship of others; friendly; sociable; gregarious
- involved in many social activities

Now think of these definitions in terms of the Internet and digital media:

- pertaining to, devoted to, or characterized by friendly companionship or relations online
- seeking or enjoying the companionship of others; friendly; sociable; gregarious online
- involved in many online social activities

Now we have a better understanding of what social media is— developing relationships, getting involved in activities, and sharing the things that interest us with others online. But what does this all mean to your business?

It means that you now have the opportunity to interact directly with your customers and cultivate relationships with them in an honest, engaging fashion. It means that you can gain valuable insight into what your customers are thinking and saying about your company and products. It means adding a layer of personality and humanity to your company, rather than just being an impersonal corporate entity.

And it’s all free to use; all that’s required of you is time and effort.

This guide is designed to show you the basics of some of the largest social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Scribd) as well as show you why they can be valuable to your business. We want to help your business to succeed in the social media universe, and we’re here to help.

Give us a shout if you have any questions about this guide or social media. Happy socializing!

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Why Facebook?

Many people use Facebook primarily for personal networking and communication with friends and family. Not surprising, since Facebook started out as a social networking site for college students. In the last couple of years; however, Facebook has expanded its horizons a bit and opened the doors to anyone and everyone—including businesses.

In the wake of this expansion, many companies, large and small, have taken advantage of the business-specific features that Facebook provides. They realized that being on Facebook offers many advantages to their businesses, including:

- **Branding:** Creating a presence on Facebook is another way that a company can extend their brand beyond their website or the walls of their physical location.
- **Customer Engagement:** Facebook, and social networking as a whole, allows those from a company to interact with and engage customers on a more personal level – person to person instead of company/entity to person.
- **Community Building:** Facebook allows you to build a community of “fans” around your brand and company. Also, you can facilitate and participate in discussions with them.
- **Market Research and Targeting:** You can use Facebook to gain insight into what your customers think about your company and products, as well as to gain access to valuable **data about your target market.**
- **Low-Cost Marketing:** Facebook doesn’t charge a nickel to create a page for your business. The only cost to you is the time and effort you put into maintaining your page.
- **SEO:** Your business page on Facebook is fully indexed for both Facebook results, and outside search engine results.

Basics of Facebook

Facebook is all about networking. As an individual, you create a profile, add friends to your network, and communicate with each other. That's a really basic, ultra-short explanation of Facebook, so here are some details to help you begin using it.

Your Profile

When you first join Facebook, you begin by creating a profile for yourself. This is not for your company – that comes later. This is for your own personal presence on Facebook, and you need this for a couple of reasons:

1. **To create a business page.** You cannot create a fan page for your business without first creating an individual profile. You will then become the administrator of your business page.
2. **You're the community manager.** Not only will you become the administrator, but also the community manager of your company's business page. You'll essentially become the "face" of your company.

When you first set up your profile, you'll add some basic information such as your bio, where you work, where you went to school, interests, etc. All of this information will help connect you with people who have similar information experiences and interests.

Beyond that, you can add your profile photo, upload additional photos to albums, and set up a profile badge. It's recommended that you do this last step, since you can use it on your other sites (such as a personal blog) to promote yourself.

When creating your individual profile, there are a few do's and don'ts to consider:

- **Do** let your own personality shine through on your profile page by adding your own photo, bio, links, etc.
- **Don't** use a company logo for your photo on your profile. This is your personal page – save the logo for your business page.
- **Do** update your status and interact with your network as usual.
- **Don't** put anything on your profile you wouldn't want your mother, boss, spouse, or half the whole world to see. Keep it clean and don't say anything that may offend the target audience of your business.
- **Do** take a look at the various applications that are available.

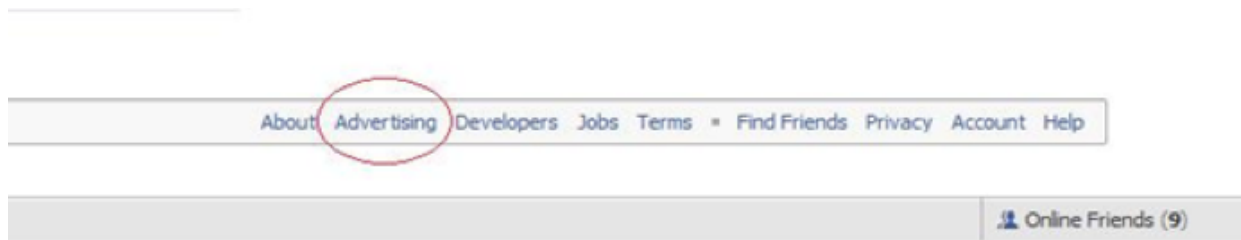
More About Facebook Applications

A Facebook application is like “software” that you can add to your profile to make it more interactive. There are applications for a variety of uses such as photos, videos, music, events, RSS feeds, or feeds from other social networking sites. There are applications that Facebook has developed, as well as those that have been developed and added by programmers, so there’s an application for virtually any and every use! Just take a look at the Facebook Application Directory. <http://www.facebook.com/apps/>

Now Comes Your Business Page

Once you’ve created your personal profile, you can create a page for your business. Now, at the time of this writing, it’s not at all obvious where you should go to begin creating a Facebook page. But you’re in luck – we’re going to tell you here.

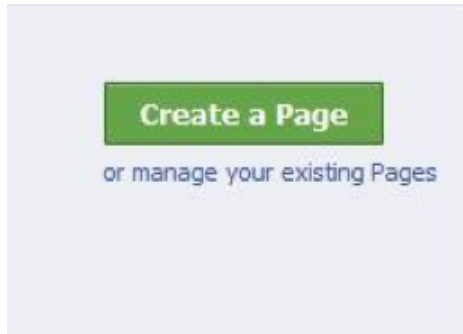
Look at the very bottom of any page on Facebook, and you’ll see a link labeled “Advertising.” Click on that link.



From Facebook’s Advertising section, click on the Pages tab at the top.



Click on the Create a Page button.



Now you're ready to start creating your Facebook business page.

- **Step 1: Choose your category.** You can create a Facebook page for a company, a product/service, or an individual. Obviously, you want to choose the most relevant category for your business, but choose carefully. Once you set this, you cannot change it without starting all over again.
- **Step 2: Name your page.** This is extremely important. Remember how we mentioned in the first section of this chapter that Facebook business pages were fully index-able, both inside and outside of Facebook? The title you choose for your page will become its URL, so include one or two major keywords in addition to your company name.

Example: Main Street Coffee Shop – Coffee Beans and Drinks in San Diego, CA

- **Step 3: Fill in your company information.** You'll be asked to fill in some information such as your website URL, a company overview and your products/ services. Make sure to use some relevant keywords for SEO here as well.
- **Step 4: Add applications.** As we've mentioned already, there are applications for a variety of uses. Now is the time to take stock of the materials you have for your company, such as your blog, other social media profiles (Twitter), photos, videos, slideshows and articles on your website, and add them to your Facebook page using the appropriate applications.

Your Facebook page already comes equipped with a few default apps, like photos, videos, and notes (which are great for posting links to your blog, important pages on your website, other social media profiles, etc.).

Here are links to a few apps we recommend:

- [Blog RSS Feed Reader](#) – imports your blog posts into your Facebook page. There are a few apps available for this purpose, but we like this one because it also includes a link for your Facebook fans to subscribe to your blog feed.
 - [Twitter](#) – imports your Twitter stream into your Facebook page.
 - [YouTube Box](#) – if you have any videos on YouTube that you want to add to your page, this app will import them in straight from YouTube.
 - [Slideshare](#) – imports your Slideshare presentations to your Facebook page.
 - [Static FBML](#) – if you're comfortable around HTML, you can add this app to your page. It allows you to add any of your own HTML, Ajax, Javascript, Flash, PHP or FBML (Facebook Markup Language) to your Facebook page's tabs.
 - [Flash Player](#) – if you have any Flash files, you can use this app to upload them to your page.
- **Step 5: Build your fan base.** The best way to do this is to promote your new Facebook page. There are a number of ways to do this, including:
 - Promotion on your website or blog
 - Inclusion of your Facebook page link in your email signatures
 - Posting a link to your page on your Facebook personal profile
 - Posting a link to your Facebook page on Twitter or FriendFeed
 - Adding a link to your Facebook page on your LinkedIn profile

Managing Your Facebook Business Page

The last thing you want to do is let your Facebook page get stale. For a successful Facebook presence, you must put time and effort into managing it and engaging your page's fans.

The "Wall" and Discussions

The Wall is used for general announcements about your company that you want to post for your fans, like website or product launches, discounts and promotions, etc. Your fans will also use the Wall to leave messages for your company, just like with a personal profile.

The Discussions area, on the other hand, is used mostly for conversing with and engaging your fans. Use the Discussions area to post questions or topics of discussion for your fans to participate in that are relevant to what your company offers. The point is to get people talking about your product or brand and engage them in conversation.

Creative Ways to Engage Your Facebook Fans

There are lots of creative ways to get your fans interacting with your brand and to build your Facebook community. Here are just a few ideas:

- **Respond to feedback.** This is extremely important. If someone posts a question or comment on your page, respond to it in a positive and helpful manner.
- **Have contests.** Create a contest relevant to your product where fans can upload videos or photos and win prizes.
- **Offer special discounts or promotions for your Facebook fans.** Papa John's had a Facebook offer where you could get a free pizza by becoming a fan of their page. Your fans will love the fact that your offer is exclusive to only them.
- **Create original content.** Just like with any other website, content that offers value to visitors is important. This is where content like videos or slideshow presentations can really increase your stock with your Facebook fans and keep them coming back.
- **Start a discussion.** Why not start a discussion thread to get to know your fans?

Monitoring and Responding to Feedback

It's important to spend time regularly monitoring your Facebook page for feedback or questions posted by your fans, as well as responding to them in a positive and helpful manner.

Tips for Dealing with Negative Feedback

If negative comments are posted, it's important to address them, rather than avoid or delete them (unless they're wholly inappropriate).

- **Don't lash out.** It's never a good idea to respond to negative feedback in a negative way. While you want to respond quickly, it may be best to take a step back before posting a hastily written and possibly angry response.
- **Thank them for their feedback.** All feedback is valuable for your company, so always thank the person for offering their opinions.
- **Be transparent.** Offer an honest but gracefully worded explanation so they can see your side.
- **Ask them what they want.** Ask them how the situation can be remedied (if required).
- **Consider a closed wall.** For some companies, this is the best and most cost effective option. Instead, post concerns or issues on your wall yourself – that way you can spin things in a positive light.

A Few Last Notes - Do's and Don'ts for Your Facebook Page

Don't spam your fans by sending tons of messages to their Facebook inboxes.

Do send periodic updates, such as new features on the page, upcoming events, or specials.

Don't ignore your Facebook page and fans.

Do interact regularly with them and perform regular updates to your Facebook page – it's now as much a part of your brand and marketing efforts as your website.

Don't forget to promote your Facebook page on your website and/or blog.

Do put noticeable links to your Facebook page and other social media profiles on your website to let your customers know that you're ready to interact with them.



Why Twitter?

Twitter is a micro-blogging platform - but what does this mean? Well, it's "blogging" because Twitter users ("tweeters") post thoughts in their own words (like a normal blog). "Micro" refers to the length of your posts ("tweets") – 140 characters or less. Upon first glance, it looks a lot like instant messaging; however, there's more to it than that. In addition to the limit on the character length, Twitter differs from instant messaging in that you can broadcast a message to thousands of people—instead of just one. This is why it has become so valuable to businesses.

Businesses use Twitter for a variety of reasons:

- **Customer Engagement:** This is probably the biggest reason businesses use Twitter. It allows you to communicate with customers directly on a personal level. Many businesses, such as Comcast (most famously), actually use Twitter for customer service, and this concept has really taken off.
- **Community Building:** Just like in the same manner that people can become your "fans" on Facebook, they can become your "followers" on Twitter and see your updates, allowing you the opportunity to build a community around your brand.
- **Branding:** Your Twitter profile can be customized with your logo and corporate colors, providing an additional online branding opportunity.
- **Market Research:** Twitter is great for gaining insight into what your customers think about your company and products. You can easily monitor conversations across Twitter for mentions of certain keywords.
- **Low-Cost Marketing:** Just like with Facebook, Twitter doesn't cost anything. The only cost to you is the time and effort you put into cultivating your Twitter presence.
- **Wider exposure to a targeted, opt-in audience:** As of this writing, there are over 4.5 million people on Twitter. This means that your message is broadcasted to a huge audience, including an extremely targeted audience of your followers who have opted -in to see your updates.

Basics of Twitter

Here are the main components of your Twitter presence and what you need to know to start using it:

Your Profile

When you sign up for Twitter, the first thing you'll need to do is create your profile. Here are the steps to take:

- **Step 1: Choose your username.** We cannot stress the importance of choosing the right username, because this will become your identity and brand on Twitter. Everyone who follows you will see this. For a corporate Twitter identity, it's best to choose your company name – and make sure it's easy for people to remember.
- **Step 2: Add your information.** You'll be asked to fill in some details for your profile, including a website URL and a bio. The bio should be brief (you're only allowed 160 characters or less here), but descriptive. You want to make sure that people know what your business does to prevent confusion.
- **Step 3: Upload a photo.** For a corporate Twitter profile, it's best to use a logo; however, your Twitter avatar is square-shaped and limited to 700k – so unless your logo is square-shaped, you may have to play around with it before uploading it. We suggest either cropping your logo around the most distinguishable part it, or creating a square-shaped version of your logo.
- **Step 4: Design your profile page.** You can customize your Twitter page background with your full-size logo and your corporate colors – changing everything from the color of your background to the color of your link and sidebar text. Do not, however, use white text under any circumstances. It will disappear against the white background of the status update area.

Start Tweeting!

Wait – there are a few things you need to know first:

@ Replies vs. Direct Messages

The main difference between the two is that the former are public and the latter are private. If you want to talk to someone or reference them in some way publicly in your tweet, you would use an @ reply.

Example 1: @chrisbrogan How are you doing today, Chris?

Example 2: Reading a great article from @imageworks Slow Economy? Keep on Marketing! <http://cli.gs/D0LAXd>

As you can see, the first example used an @ reply to talk to someone, while the second example used an @ reply to reference someone (the company that published the article).

A direct message is sent privately to someone – but you can only send direct messages to people who are following you. To send a direct message, simply use a D and a space before the username of the person.

Example: d imageworks Would you please send me your email address?

Following People (and Getting Followed Back)

The way Twitter works is that you can follow people whose updates you want to see, and people who are interested in seeing your updates can follow you. Think of it like mingling at a party or networking event – you'll listen to and talk to people that are interesting to you, and people who find you interesting will listen to and talk to you.

So, who should you follow?

This is where conversation monitoring comes in handy. Using any number of tools (which we'll talk about later in the chapter), you can find out who is talking about your company, your products (or those of your competitors), or have in an interest in what you offer. These are the people you want to follow because this will provide a foundation for building relationships.

Now, what about building your follower base? Not everyone that you follow will automatically follow you back. Here are a few ways that you can build a following on Twitter:

- 1. Be approachable, welcoming and helpful.** Share interesting links (not just your own) and help people out. Thank people if they share a link to your site or have something positive to say about your company.

2. **Be interesting and offer value.** Remember the party analogy? If you're not saying anything interesting, no one will want to listen or talk to you. In order to build interest in your products and relationships with people on Twitter, you must bring something interesting and valuable to the conversation.
3. **Promote yourself, but not all the time.** It's OK to promote your latest blog post or article, or even your newest product or service; but don't make that the only thing you do on Twitter. Remember, it is a conversation – not a monologue; so make sure to balance promotion with personality and pure conversation.
4. **Listen, don't just talk.** Listen to what people are talking about; then join in the conversation when you have something valuable to add.

Talking to and Helping Your Customers on Twitter

Twitter has been used by many companies as a sort of customer service platform. There have been stories about people who were actually able to get quicker support responses via Twitter than by calling the company on the phone or emailing them.

The point here is that you should be monitoring Twitter for conversations and questions about your company or products, and responding to those tweets in a timely manner. Offer assistance when necessary and as quickly as possible, either by an @ reply or D message, or ask for an email address to send a longer response to.

Recommended Twitter Tools

There are lots of free tools available to help you monitor conversations, find followers and manage Twitter more efficiently.

- [HootSuite](#) - This service is commonly used to manage online brands and to submit messages to the Twitter micro-blogging service. Companies and organizations known to use HootSuite include Facebook, the Obama Administration, Martha Stewart Media, SXSW, Zappos, The Gap, ImageWorks Studio, LHC and Jimmy Wales (founder of Wikipedia). HootSuite provides a browser-based dashboard that allows users to stay updated on their Twitter account. There are both full and lite versions of the service.

The HootSuite software has won awards from Mashable at their Open Web Awards 2009, the Canadian New Media Award, the Shorty Awards, and "Best Twitter app" from Australia's mX newspaper.

- **Tweetdeck** – this is a Twitter platform that you install on your computer. Using Tweetdeck, you can:
 - Send tweets
 - Monitor conversations of those you're following in real time
 - Conduct searches for your company, website, or any other related keyword on Twitter in order to monitor conversations

This is probably the most popular Twitter platform available because it's so useful. It's recommended that you use Tweetdeck to manage your personal account but manage the corporate account directly from Twitter.com. It's free to use, and you can [download it here](#).

- **[Bit.ly](#)** – when using Twitter, you'll need to shorten the URLs you share in order to stay under the 140 character limit. There are lots of URL shorteners out there; but Bit.ly is a URL shortener that also provides you with click stats.
- **Twittbot** – this tool makes it easy to manage two different accounts from one place. You can post messages to your corporate account using your personal account, and you won't have to go back and forth between the two. [Sign up for your free account here](#), and take a look at their [helpful tutorial](#) to get started.
- **[SocialToo.com](#)** – this allows you to monitor who follows and un-follows you on Twitter. By setting up a free account here, you'll receive daily emails listing follower stats.
- **[Tweetscan](#)** – this is a Twitter search tool that allows you to monitor conversations about topics you specify. You can do this using own Twitter's search, but the difference with Tweets is that you can set up email alerts, install a search box on your browser, and even download and archive of your own tweets.
- **[Twitterfeed](#)** – use this tool to automatically update your Twitter stream with items from your own RSS feeds (like your blog).
- **[Twellow](#)** – this is a Twitter directory which can help you find people to follow based on category, keywords, or geographical location. You can also claim and build out your own directory listing on Twellow.

A Few Last Notes - Do's and Don'ts for Your Twitter Account

Do set up a separate account for a designated community manager who will be responsible for monitoring Twitter and all other social media accounts.

Do encourage other employees to set up their own personal Twitter accounts and join in the conversation.

Don't just make it about you and your company. This is a sure-fire way to be un-followed or not followed at all.

Do offer value to followers in a non-self-serving way and balance promotion with conversation.

Do respond quickly to questions and feedback and be as helpful as possible.

Don't forget to thank people for positive feedback.

Why Social Bookmarking Sites?

Social bookmarking sites allow you to bookmark and share interesting links with your network of friends. There are many social bookmarking sites out there. Here are a few reasons why they are so popular among businesses, bloggers and website owners:

- **Traffic:** Links on social bookmarking sites have the potential to receive lots of clicks, bringing significant amounts of traffic to the bookmarked site. Of course, this depends on the popularity of the link on a given social bookmarking site, which is why we emphasize that there is potential for significant traffic.
- **Building Authority:** If the content on your site is engaging and offers informational value to the reader, then sharing this knowledge through social bookmarking sites can help to build your company's authority in a particular niche.
- **SEO/Link Building:** Some (but not all) social bookmarking sites are "dofollow", which means the links are followed by search engines. We'll go over which sites are dofollow later in the chapter.
- **Community Building:** Social bookmarking sites can help to build interest in the content on your site because many people will share your content with their own networks through the bookmarking sites. This is a great way to build a community around your content and your brand.

Social Bookmarking Sites to Consider

You've probably already heard of sites like Digg, Reddit, and StumbleUpon. Those are probably the top 3 social bookmarking sites out there, but there are probably hundreds of bookmarking sites that not only have general interest topics, but also serve niche industries and interests as well.

Here are the top general topic social bookmarking sites, as of December 2010:

- [Digg](#)
- [StumbleUpon](#)
- [Reddit](#)
- [Propeller](#)
- [Mixx](#)
- [Fark](#)
- [BlinkList](#)
- [Diigo](#)
- [Ma.gnolia](#)

While these general social bookmarking sites are great for potentially bringing in large amounts of traffic, niche social bookmarking sites are great for much more targeted traffic (and therefore, more effective in terms of potential conversion). Here is just a handful to consider (you can find even more on this list):

Business/Marketing

[Small Business Brief](#)

[Business Exchange](#)

Cars

[Motorpulse](#)

Computers/Technology

[Tweako](#)

Web Designers & Developers

[Design Float](#)

[Dzone](#)

Finance

[Tip'd](#)

Health

[Health Ranker](#)

Marketing

[Gooruze](#)

[Sphinn](#)

Education

[Edutagger](#)

Pets

[Dogster](#)

[Catster](#)

Sports

[SportsMates](#)

[ArmChairGM](#)

DoFollow Social Bookmarking Sites

These sites allow search engines to follow the links bookmarked on their sites, which is good for your SEO and link building efforts:

- Digg
- BUMPzee
- Reddit
- Propeller
- Sphinn
- Dzone
- Small Business Brief
- Hubspot

How to Tell if a Site is dofollow or nofollow

If you want to find out if a social bookmarking site is dofollow or nofollow, it's pretty easy to do.

Internet Explorer: Go to the site; click on the Page button in your toolbar; click on View Source. In the Notepad file that pops up, go to Edit, then Find. Type the word "nofollow" (without the quotes). If you find the word "nofollow", then the site is NOT a dofollow site.

Firefox: Go to the site; click on the View menu at the top of the browser; then click on Page Source. In the window that pops up, click on Edit, then Find. Type the word "nofollow" (without the quotes). If you find the word "nofollow", then the site is NOT a dofollow site.

Tagging Your Bookmarks Appropriately

Tagging is the use of keywords to properly categorize and organize your bookmarks. When you tag your bookmarks, those tags can then be used for members of a social bookmarking site to search for (and find) your content. This is why it's important to tag your bookmarks appropriately.

Tagging Tips

- **Bone up on the requirements.** Different social bookmarking sites have different tagging requirements. Some will limit the number of keyword tags you can use, while others have different requirements for how tags are entered. Pay attention to these requirements so your content will not get overlooked due to miss-tagging.
- **Conduct keyword research.** Just like you would research keywords for SEO, it's important to research keywords for tagging on social bookmarking sites. Research each of the social bookmarking sites you plan to submit to and make a list of 10-15 popular keywords for your category/niche that are relevant to your content.
- **Make a spreadsheet.** Make a list of the social bookmarking sites you're submitting to, and include columns for the site, priority (in terms of traffic or niche), the main category your content falls into, and 10-15 keyword tags that should be used.

A Few Last Notes - Do's and Don'ts of Social Bookmarking

Do share relevant, valuable content from external, non-competitive sources and from your own site.

Don't just bookmark your own content. This may, in some cases, get you banned from a social bookmarking site.

Don't bookmark all your content at once. This could also potentially get you banned.

Do bookmark content intermittently over a period of time (i.e. once a week).

Do network with other members of the community. Monitor who is submitting your content to social bookmarking sites and add them as friends.

Don't spam your network. It's OK to ask for diggs, stumbles, etc. periodically, but don't do it too much, as it could not only annoy people in your network, but also get you banned from the site.

Do tag your content with as many appropriate tags as you are allowed to use.

Don't forget to do your keyword tagging research before bookmarking your content!



Why LinkedIn?

There are many social networking sites out there that serve all sorts of niches – and a new one seems to pop up every day. LinkedIn, on the other hand, isn't your run-of-the-mill social networking site. Founded in 2003, LinkedIn is the top website on the Internet for business networking, with over 34 million members worldwide. Many of these members use LinkedIn to find jobs; but it's also used for finding new clients, re-connecting with old friends, and sharing information.

LinkedIn is most effective as part of a social media strategy when individual employees are involved heavily with in their own profiles, rather than when a single company page is built. Here are some ways to leverage LinkedIn to promote your business:

- **Connectivity and networking:** Like other social networking sites, LinkedIn makes it easy for people to connect with you and your company employees on a more personal level.
- **Links to your website/blog:** LinkedIn allows you and your employees to add links to your website, blog, RSS feed, or anything else to your individual profile.
- **Content Promotion:** Using one of LinkedIn's applications, you and your employees can add blog feeds and slideshows to your profiles.
- **SEO:** The profiles of you and your employees are index-able by search engines, as well as your company's LinkedIn page.
- **Building authority:** By answering questions and participating in group discussions (while also providing links to relevant content on your site), you can build authority around yourself and your company.
- **Research:** Use LinkedIn to scope out your competition, find out about a potential business partner, or conduct market research.

Basics of LinkedIn

Here are the main features of LinkedIn:

Individual Profile – this is like an online resume with a summary of your expertise, work experience, professional interests, associations you’re involved in, etc.

Company Profile – shows key information and stats about your company, as well as employees in your network, recent hires, and recent promotions.

Answers – this is a Q&A area where you ask and answer questions about your industry, niche, area of expertise, etc.

Applications – a variety of applications can be plugged into your individual profile to enrich it and enable you to interact with your network in different ways. These include:

- Adding your blog feed
- Polling your network
- Sharing a slideshow presentation
- Sharing files and collaborating
- Viewing “buzz” about your company
- Sharing travel itineraries
- Sharing books you’re reading

Creating a Personal LinkedIn Presence

Your individual profile (and those of your employees) will provide the foundation of your company’s presence on LinkedIn. At least one person from your company must have a profile in order to create one for the company as a whole.

Creating Your Profile

Your individual profile doesn't have to look exactly like your resume, but should summarize it well and portray yourself in the best professional light possible. It should also be well-optimized with keywords that are highly relevant to your professional expertise and take advantage of linking opportunities.

Headline: This is the first thing that is seen by prospective networkers and should be as specific as possible so as not to cause confusion about what you do. Use keywords that are highly relevant to your space and for which you would want your profile to show up in LinkedIn search results.

Photo: It's up to you whether you want to include your photo; however, since LinkedIn is a social network, it's recommended that you do. If you opt to use a photo, use a good, clear headshot. It doesn't have to be professionally photographed, but it should make you look professional.

Experience: First of all, your summary should be a paragraph or two that describes your experience in a nutshell and is optimized with your niche keywords. Don't make this too long – make it succinct and scan-able for readers. Your areas of expertise specialties should be presented in a well-optimized, comprehensive list.

When listing your job experience, stay within the constraints of your actual current and past titles, but make sure to create keyword-rich experience blurbs for each.

Links: You cannot forget to add these. You're allowed up to 3 links, so choose carefully the ones you want to include (company website, your blog, a company Facebook or Twitter page). When adding these links, it's best to use an "Other" type link so you can use your own anchor text. Otherwise, LinkedIn uses the anchor text "My Blog", "My Website", "My Company" (which isn't great for link-building).

Building Connections

This is the main reason for being on LinkedIn – to build a network of professional connections. Here are a few tips to help you build an effective network:

- **Build connections** from people you know personally or have worked with in some capacity.
- **Consider connecting with people you know on other social networks**, or through LinkedIn groups of which you're a member.

- **Be careful about who you request to connect with**, as they could deny your request (LinkedIn penalizes you for that).
- **When sending a message to request a connection, be as personal as possible.** LinkedIn automatically fills in a generic message; but you should personalize that message with the person's name, where you know them from, and why you want to connect with them.

Recommendations

One of the reasons why LinkedIn works so well for networking and finding jobs is the recommendations feature. Recommendations appear on your individual profile and are visible to anyone who views your profile. You can give someone a recommendation, and they can give one back to you.

The Recommendations feature allows you to request a recommendation from someone, which may seem sort of odd at first, but it is OK to request recommendations from your network. Before doing so, however, consider these tips first:

- **Request recommendations** from people you have worked with and who know you well.
- **Reciprocate.** This is why it's best to give recommendations to people in your network first. They may reciprocate with a recommendation without you having to ask.
- **Make your request for a recommendation as personal as possible** – don't use pre-fabricated "template" requests.
- **Tell the person why you're asking for a recommendation.** Coach them gently on what you'd like the recommendation to be about; but not what you want it to say (there's a difference). For instance, "Would you mind speaking to the project management work I did while at XYZ Company?"
- **Don't make them feel obligated to write a recommendation for you.** Don't mention that you wrote a recommendation for them or that you're looking for a reciprocal recommendation.

Adding Applications

Just like in the same way that Facebook has applications to enhance your profile and business page, LinkedIn has business-specific applications to enhance your individual profile. There are applications to help promote your content (such as blog feeds and slideshows), collaborate with people, and even share books that you're reading. For more useful applications, check out the [LinkedIn Application Directory](#).

Networking and Building Authority

Earlier in the chapter, we explained how to build your network on LinkedIn by connecting with people you know and have worked with – but as you know, there is so much more to networking than just staying within the confines of those you know.

Here, we'll explain how you can use LinkedIn Groups and Answers to effectively expand your network of connections.

Groups

LinkedIn has [a huge directory of groups](#) that allow you to find other professionals who share common interests – whether they're professional or personal.

There are groups for virtually every interest, industry, hobby, and association— all you have to do is search. By joining a group, you can participate in group discussions, read the latest industry news, and connect up with other members over a common interest. Participating in group discussions are also a great way to build authority and credibility in your company.

If there isn't a group for your interest or industry, than you can even [create one](#). Many larger companies have even created LinkedIn groups for [current and former employees](#).

Answers

Whether you have questions related to your business or industry, or want to help others out by providing advice, LinkedIn Answers is one of the best resources on the Internet for business-related information and opinions from literally millions of professionals.

Providing insightful answers to questions related to your industry is a great way to not only build authority for your company, but also build links back to related content on your site. When you answer a question, you can provide reference links to external content. If there is informational content on your site that you can use as a reference, then you'll build credibility and interest in what your company offers.

We recommend checking LinkedIn Answers on a regular basis for questions that you can answer in an insightful way (we can't stress insightful enough – this is how you build authority).

Creating Your Company Profile

Once you have your individual profile created, you can create a profile for your company. People will see your company profile by:

- Searching the Companies directory
- Clicking on your company name from your profile or your employees' profiles

This is what a typical company profile looks like:

Companies beta Add Company | Company Directory | What's this? | Feedback

Google Find a company

Google is a public and profitable company focused on search services. Named for the mathematical term "googol," Google operates web sites at many international domains, with the most trafficked being www.google.com. Google is widely recognized as the "world's best search engine" because it is fast, accurate and easy to use. The company also serves corporate clients, including... [see more](#)

Specialties
search, software, advertising

Google Employees on LinkedIn
500+ total, 134 in your network

- Jeff Martin**, Senior Product Marketing Manager
Greater Denver Area
- Tom Leeca (tleeca@gmail.com)**, Product Manager
San Francisco Bay Area
- Todd Wiseman**, Manager Federal Civilian
Washington D.C. Metro Area
- Manish Vijay [LION] mvm_cool [at] yahoo.co.in**, Sourcer
Hyderabad Area, India
- Lauren Carpenter**, Account Coordinator
Greater New York City Area

[See more Google employees »](#)

New Hires [What's this?](#)

- Koichiro Tsujino**, President
was President at Sony - this month
- Ariel Hochstadt**, Product Marketing Manager

Related Companies
Divisions: [DoubleClick](#), [YouTube](#)

Career path for Google employees
before: [Microsoft](#), [IBM](#) after: [Microsoft](#), [Yahoo!](#)

Google employees are most connected to:
[Yahoo!](#), [Facebook](#), [Microsoft](#), [Amazon.com](#)

Key Statistics

Top Locations

- San Francisco Bay Area (500+)
- London, United Kingdom (500+)
- Greater New York City Area (500+)
- Greater Los Angeles Area (500+)

Headquarters Address

Headquarters	San Francisco Bay Area
Industry	Internet
Type	Public Company
Status	Operating
Company Size	20 000 employees

This page displays key company statistics, contact information and selected employees. A company profile can also show news about the company, stock information and jobs that the company has listed on LinkedIn.

There are 4 basic steps to creating your company's profile:

- **Step 1:** Go to the Companies area of LinkedIn and click on the “Add a Company” button.
- **Step 2:** Enter your company name and email address. A verification email with further instructions will be sent to you.
- **Step 3:** Once you've verified your email address, you can fill in your company's basic information (such as website URL, description, industry, number of employees, location, etc.).
- **Step 4:** Upload your logo (very important for branding).

This page, like your individual profile, is fully index-able by search engines, so make sure you fill in your description with keywords related to your industry.

A Few Last Notes - Do's and Don'ts for LinkedIn

Do fill in your profile to the fullest extent and use keywords that people might use to find you or your company.

Don't make your headline or summary too long and wordy. While using the proper keywords are important, your profile still needs to be succinct and readable.

Do add the following to your profile: links to your website, blog, or other important and relevant links.

Don't use the “My Company”, “My Blog”, or “My RSS Feed” labels that LinkedIn provides. Use the “Other” label and type in your own anchor text for better link building.

Do join groups and participate in discussions to build your network and credibility.

Don't be too promotional when participating in discussions and answering questions. Provide insightful, useful information to build credibility.



Why SlideShare?

SlideShare is the world's largest social networking site for sharing slideshow presentations. Because slideshows are mainly used by businesses rather than individuals, SlideShare presents a unique way for companies to promote their existing presentations from demos, seminars, and webinars on a larger scale.

There are many benefits for businesses to use SlideShare, including:

- **Credibility and Authority Building:** By sharing valuable knowledge through your slideshow presentations, you'll build credibility for your company.
- **Lead Generation:** This is likely the reason you created your slideshow presentations in the first place, and SlideShare gives you the opportunity to generate leads on a larger scale.
- **Branding:** As with most other social networking sites, you can create your own branded channel on SlideShare, called a "Slidespace," with your company information and all of your presentations.
- **Link building/SEO:** Your SlideShare URL contains your username (which can be your company name), and you can add a link to your website and keyword-optimized text to your Slidespace page.
- **Community Building:** You're able to connect with other SlideShare users who are interested in your presentations and build a community of prospective customers.

Ways You Can Utilize SlideShare for Your Business

You may already have presentations that you've used for demos, seminars, or webinars that you can repurpose for SlideShare; however, there are a variety of reasons why you should create new ones just to share on SlideShare:

- **Visually explain complex concepts** – some things are better explained visually, and this might be the one way to get prospective customers to understand something complex about your product or service.
- **How-to/demo presentations** – create an informational how-to presentation to help to build credibility and authority for your company.
- **Share a seminar/webinar presentation from another event** – make it easy for people who weren't able to attend your seminar or webinar to access your presentation.
- **Sales presentations** – use SlideShare to host your sales presentations and make it easy for prospects to access them.
- **Case studies** – transform a written case study on your website into a presentation to explain the study in a more clear, visual manner.

Why Scribd?

Scribd is the world's largest social reading and publishing company. They've made it easy to share and discover entertaining, informative and original written content across the web and mobile devices as PDFs. Their vision is to liberate the written word, by connecting people with the information and ideas that matter most to them.

There are many benefits for businesses to use Scribd, including:

- **Credibility and Authority Building:** By sharing valuable knowledge through your PDFs, you'll build credibility for your company.
- **Lead Generation:** This is likely the reason you created your PDF Brochures in the first place, and Scribd gives you the opportunity to generate leads on a larger scale.
- **Branding:** As with most other social networking sites, you can create your own branded channel on Scribd with your company information and all of your presentations.
- **Link building/SEO:** Your Scribd URL contains your username (which can be your company name), and you can add a link to your website and keyword-optimized text to your Scribd page.
- **Community Building:** You're able to connect with other Scribd users who are interested in your documents and build a community of prospective customers.

Ways You Can Utilize Scribd for Your Business

You may already have PDFs that you've used for brochures, case studies, and white papers that you can repurpose for Scribd. Often times these PDFs can get a second lease on life because of the thousands of new visitors that have never seen them before.

Promoting Your Social Media Presence

Just because you create profiles on social media sites, doesn't mean people will automatically flock to them. It's important to promote your presence on social media sites so your customers and prospects will know where to find you.

Here are some ways in which you can spread the word and let people know that you're ready to socialize:

- **Links from your website or blog:** Add links to your Facebook page, Twitter profile, LinkedIn profile, SlideShare page, and Scribd page on your blog or website with calls-to-action to follow, friend, or connect with your company.
- **Sharing your content:** Make it easy for your website/blog visitors to bookmark your content to various general and niche social bookmarking sites by adding buttons that enable sharing and bookmarking.
- **Cross promote on other social sites:** There are lots of ways you can do this. Here are just a few:
 - Add LinkedIn's SlideShare app to your LinkedIn profile to promote your slideshow presentations.
 - If you have a link to your Twitter feed on your LinkedIn profile and add their Bloglink app, it will pick up your Twitter feed.
 - Add a link to your Facebook page to your LinkedIn profile
 - Add a link to your Squidoo lens to your LinkedIn profile
 - Facebook has several apps available for social sites like Slideshare, Twitter, and Stumbleupon for cross-promotion on your Facebook page

A Few Last Notes About Using Social Media for Your Business

When the Internet first came into our lives back in the 1990's, we became connected with each other in a whole new way. With the growth in popularity of social media, we've made those connections even stronger. It has made it even easier for businesses to connect with customers and converse with them in an honest, transparent way.

Your customers are in the driver's seat – sharing information and opinions about the companies and products they like and don't like with the plugged-in world at large. Businesses should be embracing social media in order to better understand customers and what drives them to buy – and not to just push-market their products. When implementing a social media strategy, it's important to keep these 3 tips in mind for best results:

- Be original
- Be engaging
- Be transparent