

Home Business Websites

Free & Affordable Ways to Make Sales

Use Social Media, Bing/Yahoo and YouTube to make sales. Also included are free tools and services.

FACEBOOK

Make friends on Facebook!

One of the easiest and fastest ways to make your first online sale is by leveraging the power of Facebook. This social media powerhouse has two separate mechanisms for you to launch your brand. They are:

1. Your personal Facebook profile
2. Your brand's Facebook page

You're probably familiar with your own Facebook profile. However, Facebook brand pages are a totally different beast and should be operated in a different way. Let's get into how you should operate both your personal profile and your brand page during the early stages of your new online store.

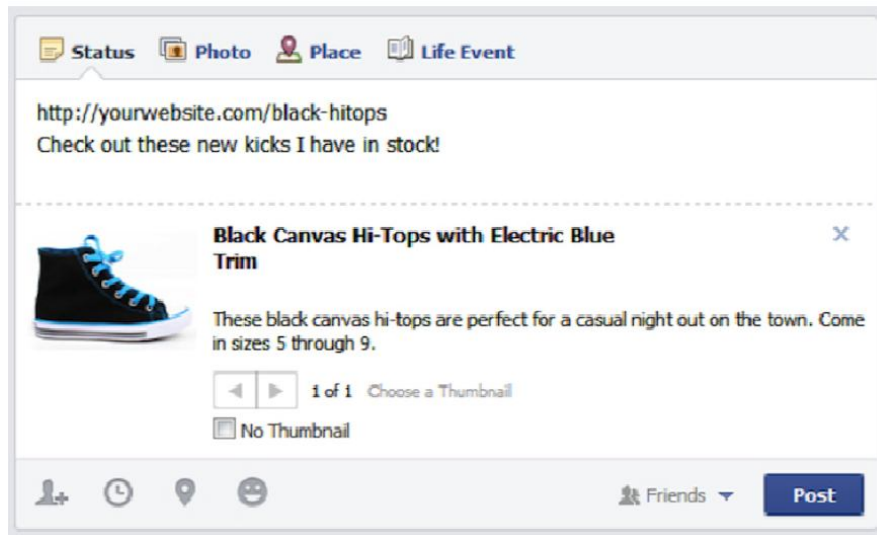
Your Personal Facebook Profile

This will be your best friend during your first months of starting up. However, you have to treat your Facebook profile with a lot of respect. Otherwise you will lose friends and potentially lose your account.

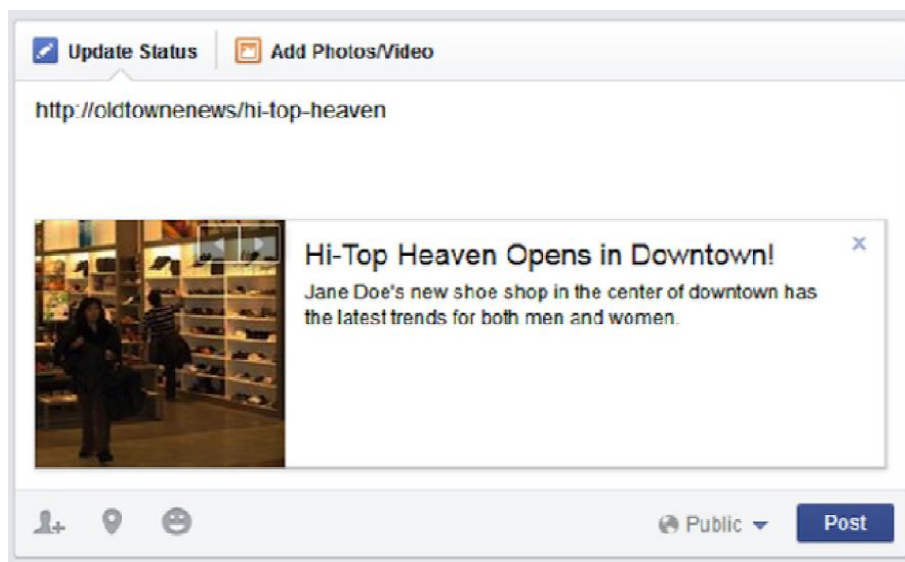
There is nothing wrong with doing a little self-promotion on your personal Facebook profile. Your friends and family will likely love to see what you're up to as long as you don't overdo it. Sharing products with your personal Facebook profile is very effective; in fact, studies show that upwards of 62 percent of people read such posts.



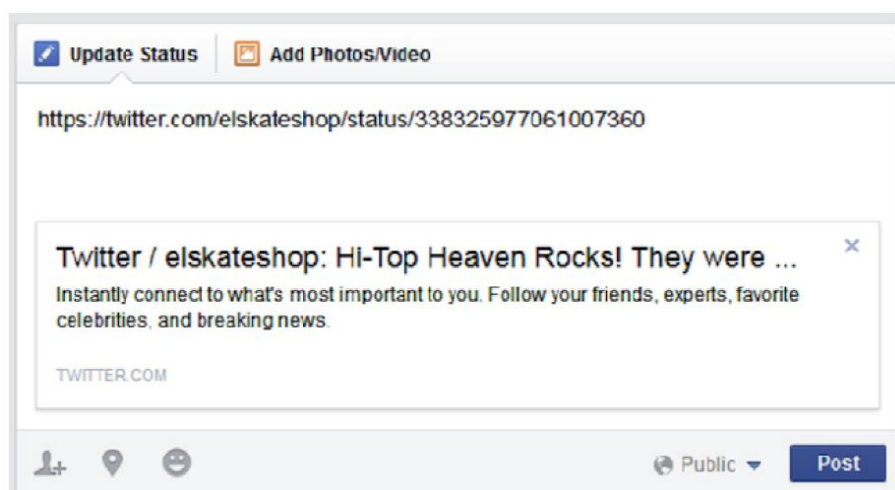
A good rule of thumb is to update your profile about once a day with either a link to a product from your online store or website.



You can also share a press mention about your business



Or a link to a tweet from a fan, friend or family member.



Another idea is you can post a survey or ask a question.



Also, maybe about once a month share your 'about us' or 'story' webpage. The story about your business is a great form of social currency, so spend time crafting a good story. From time to time you might also want to paste in the text about your story from your website instead of just pasting the link. The reason for this is that more of the text will show up on your friend's feed, thereby delivering more of the story right off the bat.

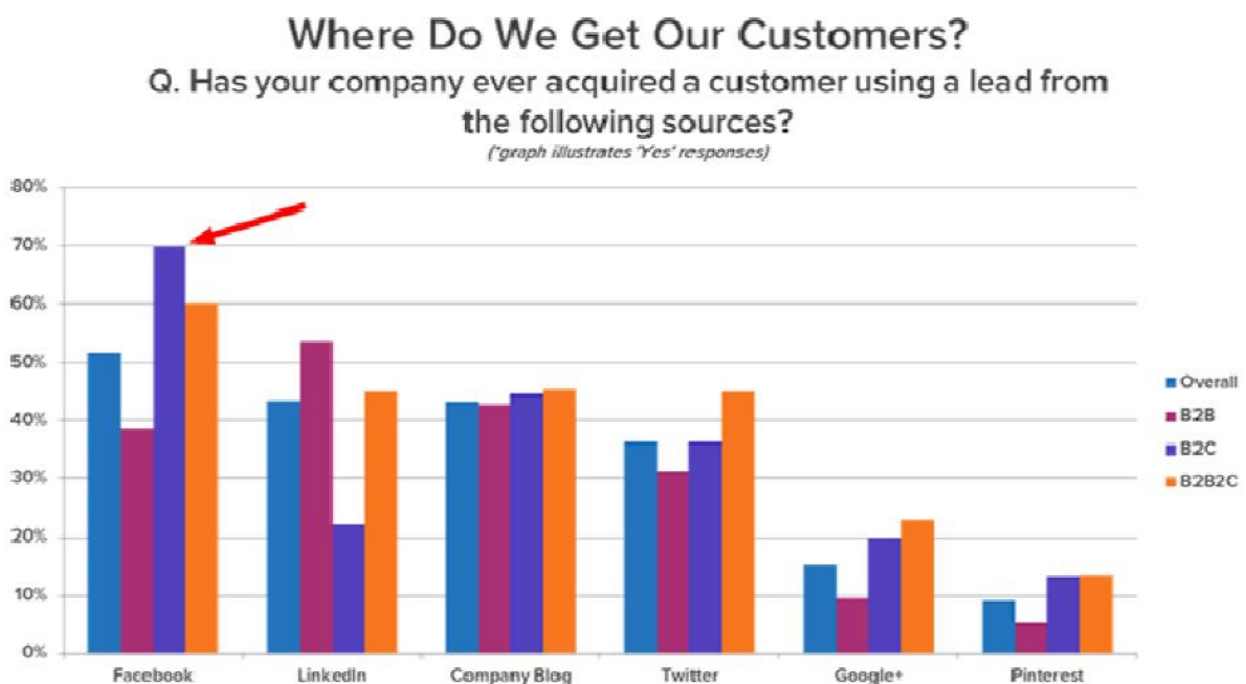
Now it's still possible that once a day is too much for your friends and family. You will have to be the judge of how much is too much. If you need to tone down your posting frequency because of complaints or loss of friends then consider scaling it back a notch.

Finally, remember to keep using your personal Facebook profile for what it's meant for. Continue to share photos, news articles, liking people's posts and being a normal user. Don't switch over to 'business only' mode. All you are going to do differently is occasionally post something relevant about your new business.

Your Business' Facebook Page

Facebook Pages are designed for businesses, brands and other types of organisations. Facebook only wants you to promote your business through your Facebook page. That's why we stress that you should keep business promotion through your personal Facebook profile to a minimum.

With Facebook pages, only people who have 'liked' your Facebook page will see your updates. In a sense, these people have given you permission to advertise to them. This is a very key point about online marketing these days – permission marketing is much more effective than the old days of spamming everyone under the sun. The good news is that with a Facebook page, you're in good company, with over 70 percent of businesses acquiring customers through the social platform.



You will promote on your Facebook page exactly like how you do it on your Facebook profile with posts and links to products, PR mentions, and stories about your business. However, a better way to get deeper engagement on Facebook is to post updates on things that are not directly related to purchasing one of your products.

A great way to get more Facebook page engagement is to post:

- Industry trends and news
- Funny, cute, and high-quality photos (that you have a legal right to publish)
- Uplifting stories
- Inspirational quotes
- Fun polls or surveys

Although some of these updates won't have anything to do with your brand per se, they will bond a stronger relationship between your brand and those that have 'Liked' your Facebook page. What you are doing here is strengthening your fan base, which generally pays dividends down the line.

Here's the key: Do not overly promote your brand and your products - only post a couple times every day. Most importantly, be sure to respond to comments and keep the conversations going.

Since a portion of your Facebook friends will also be fans, be sure that you don't post the same content on both your profile and page on the same day. Always change up what you're posting to keep your Facebook campaign fresh from every angle.

At first, there is a large likelihood that your Facebook page won't have as much effect as your profile. But the important thing is to keep it updated often. Years down the road, this effort will pay off. The reason for this is because you will be nurturing a marketing list – a powerful marketing strategy that we'll talk about extensively in this book.

Now that we have gone over the difference between profiles and pages, let's get into some actionable stuff you can do right now:

1. Create a list of all your family and friends. Go through your Facebook page and email contacts one by one. We suggest putting their names and email addresses in a spreadsheet.
2. Reach out to each person with a personalised email or Facebook message. You don't have to ask them to buy your product, but simply ask for their feedback. Even ask if they will write a testimonial.
3. A few days later, ask each friend and family member to 'Like' your Facebook page. You may not want to send a spammy all-inclusive email to everyone, but actually take the time to message each person individually.
4. At a later date, ask them to post a message about what you are doing on their Facebook feed. Don't forget to give them information on where they can purchase your products.

Now if you are lucky, this initial marketing campaign might just be enough to ignite your business into an overnight success. However, chances are it will simply be a good introduction to a wide audience of people, and it will lead to you making sales!

LINKEDIN

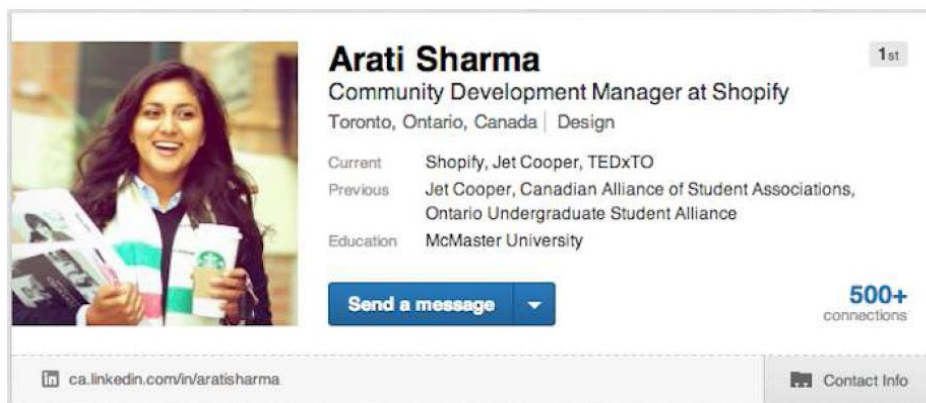
Network on LinkedIn

Think of LinkedIn as your professional Facebook profile. Depending on what you're selling, you may find yourself spending as much time on LinkedIn developing your business as Facebook.

Now the advantage of LinkedIn isn't necessarily just making direct sales. It's also about expanding your network and creating a wide array of opportunities.

Hopefully, you already have a LinkedIn profile and have been managing it over the years. If not, no worries go ahead and sign up for one now.

How to Make Connections on LinkedIn

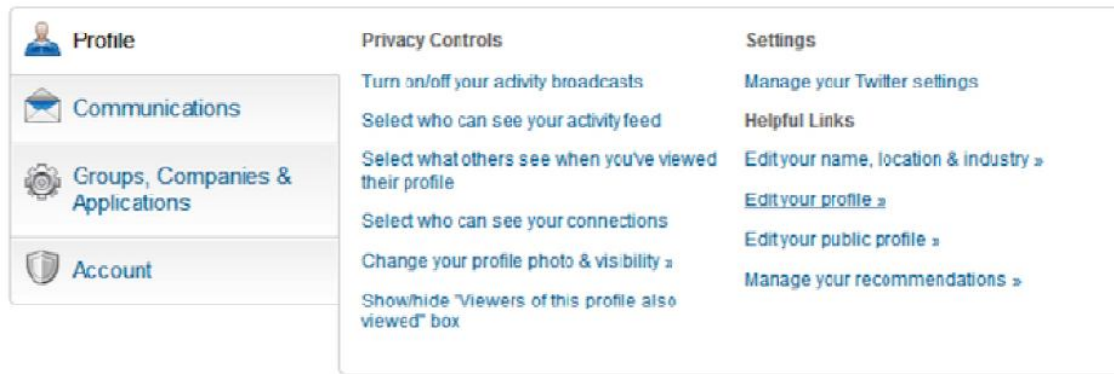


Like Facebook, LinkedIn is a social network, but instead of 'friending' people, you simply 'make a connection'. Obviously, the more connections you have, the larger audience you can broadcast to. Ecommerce merchants should expand their network as much as possible. Here are some ways you can increase the number of connections:

1. *Use LinkedIn's 'Add Connections' feature* – When you are logged into your LinkedIn account, you can click on 'Contacts' and then 'Add Connections'. This feature will scour your email contacts and make suggestions of people you may want to connect with on LinkedIn.
2. *Go through your old business cards* – If you're like us, you probably have collected hundreds (if not thousands) of business cards over the years. LinkedIn is a great place to put those business cards to use.
3. *Add your friends and family members from Facebook* – Doubling up on people from multiple networks may seem counterintuitive. But when you're marketing your product or service, it's the number of 'touches' that count before someone decides to do business with you. By having some of your Facebook friends as LinkedIn connections, the familiarity of your message will become more prominent with them.
4. *Every time you meet someone new add them to LinkedIn* – In your day to day operations, you'll likely be emailing people that you do business with. If you have established a good rapport with them, search for them on LinkedIn and try to make a connection. If you feel comfortable doing this with certain customers, you may want to add them as well. Having them see your accolades, awards and credibility may strengthen their trust in you and your business.

It's really important to only make connections with people you know or have met in the past. Don't add people you don't know or have no connection to at all. Not only does LinkedIn frown upon adding people you don't know, it also lessens the effect for when you broadcast your messages.

How to Complete Your Profile



Your LinkedIn profile is basically an online resume. You're going to want to fill out your past job experiences and of course, what you are up to now.

A lot of people will read your 'summary'. So spend time crafting something engaging about your new business venture. Here are some things you can do to spice it up:

- *Tell a story* – Stories are much more fun to read than your typical resume jargon. Humans have evolved to remember things via story telling.
- *Clearly express your unique selling proposition* – It's vitally important to clearly convey to people why your online business is different and stands out from the rest.
- *Tell people how they can help you* – At first this advice may sound a little self-serving. But in a networking environment it's perfectly acceptable to let people know what kind of customers you're looking for. Doing this actually increases the power for other people to conduct effective networking with you. They will know who to send your way, and you'll likely want to know who to send their way. For example, if you ran an online skateboard store you could say 'The ideal customers for me are teenagers looking for their first skateboard setup'.

A Quick Note about Posting Updates

The one thing that differentiates LinkedIn updates from Facebook updates is that they are seen as professional messages. On Facebook, people post whatever is on their mind, so an update doesn't always hold much weight. When someone sees your update on LinkedIn, generally your network will take it much more seriously.

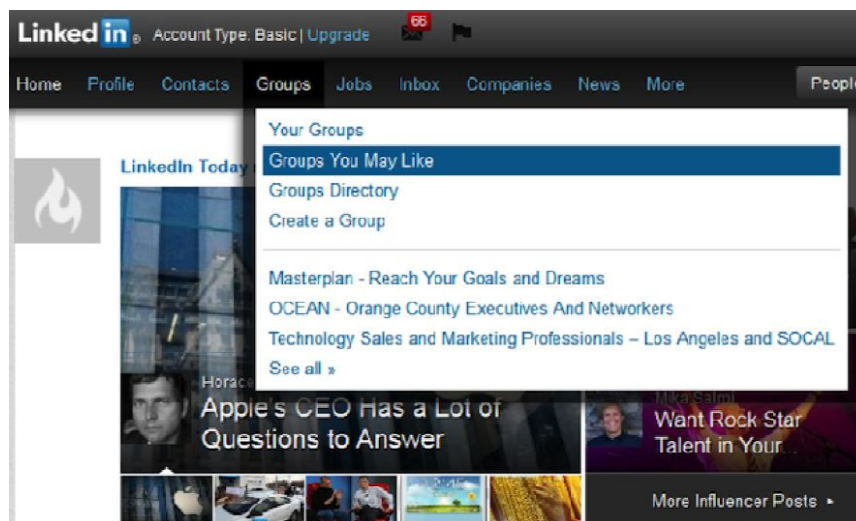
The Three Things You Should Post on LinkedIn

1. *Links to your product web pages* – Since you're in the business of selling something, feel free to post links to your products. It's totally acceptable to do this because this is business and that's what LinkedIn is all about. Like Facebook, you probably want to keep your updating to some sort of a minimum. Don't get into the habit of spamming your network.
2. *Content that your network will find valuable* – LinkedIn is a great place to share useful content that your network will like. This can be from any online website or blog. Spend some time collecting good articles, info, graphics and videos that your network will appreciate.
3. *Your own content* – As you build your online presence, a smart thing to do is to create digital guides to inform and educate online visitors. Buyer's guides, info, graphics and instructional videos are forms of marketing material that you can share on LinkedIn.

Finally, when you're posting updates be sure to write a description in addition to including links to your website. Conversional blurbs tend to get more engagement from your network than sales pitches or boring product descriptions.

How to Get Started with LinkedIn Groups

Browse LinkedIn's suggestions for 'Groups You May Like' and join groups that are very active. If you're like us, as soon as you join a group and peer through the latest discussion, you'll be eager to put in a couple of words. And that's exactly what you're going to do here. You're going to educate people as unbiasedly as possible.



Here are a couple tips to make LinkedIn Groups go the extra mile for you:

- *Don't Spam* – To remain a long standing member of a group, you're going to have to fit in. Generally groups don't like people who come in and overly promote their business. Over time, your group will bring and refer business to you (that's the point of networking).
- *Join Discussions Frequently* – Spend time every day adding your thoughts to a current discussion. Show that you are the expert in your area and always remain unbiased.

Depending on the groups you join and the nature of your products – you might unearth gold mines of future customers or at the very least your first one. For example, if you run an online shop that sells kayaking equipment, find a few kayak enthusiast groups and share some knowledge. It's really that easy. Treat these groups and connections with the utmost respect to yield years of return in the form of customers and referrals, out of which you might just get your first sale.

Networking on LinkedIn 101

You've probably heard that networking is an important thing to do at some point in your life. While of course that's true, there are a few things you need to know about networking to make it effective. Here are 4 tips to help you network on LinkedIn:

1. *Find the best groups that work for you and stick with them.* As you go out and interact with groups in real life or online – some groups are going to create synergy and some aren't. Figure out what groups work for you and ditch the ones that get you nowhere.
2. *Continuously meet with the same people so they remember you.* The more people that see you on a repeated basis and know what it is you do, the easier you come to mind if the opportunity for them to refer you arises. It may sound incredibly obvious – but we can't stress how important and powerful familiarity is when it comes to networking.
3. *Don't network sporadically.* It's easy for people who are beginning to network to go out and try a gazillion different groups. Don't do this. Find a few groups and stick to them. This will conserve your energy and again help out with the familiarity factor mentioned above. And above all, ask other long-time networkers what groups work well for them.
4. *For networking to become effective, it takes time.* After your first couple weeks of networking, you may feel that it's not worth it. You need to stick with it for at least a few months. Be sure to follow up with people and continue to meet with your groups. Professional networkers will tell you that networking is the only form of advertising or marketing they ever do.

These rules apply for both the offline and online world. The important thing to remember is that you should only network with online groups that are active online. Don't waste your time with people who have just joined up once and haven't visited in months.

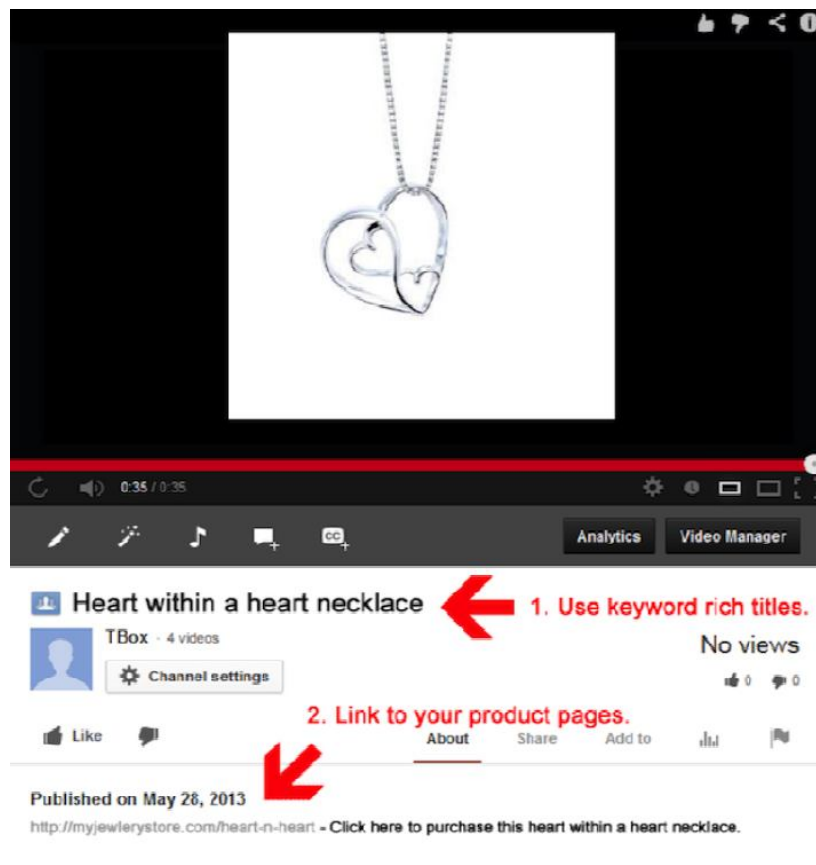
YOUTUBE

Get Busy on YouTube!

YouTube usually ranks around the second or third most popular search engine on earth. It provides a powerful tool for business owners and has an unlimited amount of creative ways in which you can drive traffic and sales to your ecommerce store.

One of the main advantages of YouTube is that your video will be included in Google and YouTube search results. Each video you create is a piece of inbound marketing content that will help you sell for years to come. You can also use YouTube videos on your own website to help communicate the benefits of your products.

How a YouTube Video Helps You Sell



It's all about product videos. Let's say you sell jewellery online. Create a short video showing off a unique piece that you carry. For example, let's say you sell a piece of jewellery called 'heart within a heart.' To help drive online sales of this item, you could create a video showcasing the design, material and luster of this piece of jewellery.

How to Make YouTube Videos

You can record a video using any; - Smartphone, iPhone, iPad, Laptop, Tablet or Computer with a webcam. You can also record a video using your digital camera if it has a video setting.

You can also record a free online video using; - <http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/>

There's an Easier Option, Let Us Post a Video for You!

Home Business Websites is more than happy to include your video testimonial about your business, how you have found using your website, setup of your website etc on our YouTube channel.

Firstly tell people a bit about your own business. Then provide some feedback on ours, for example; - how you have found using your website, how you have found the setup process and how you have found using our support centre.

Send your video to us using www.dropsend.com (it will be too large to send via email.) Address it to sales@homebusinesswebsites.com.au and we can then post this on our YouTube Channel. This will offer you and your website exposure, as well as providing your business with listings in Google and other major search engines.

What Type of Content Should You Produce For Your Own YouTube Channel?

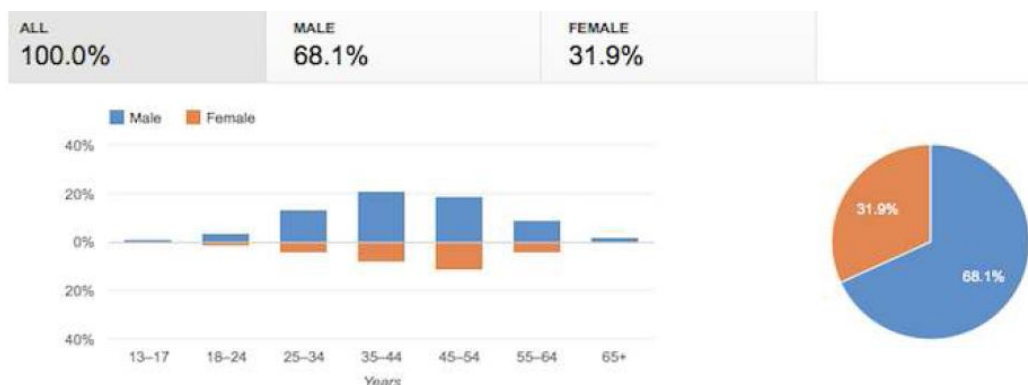
This is where you can really open up the creative floodgates. The most boring thing you can do is simply film your product and talk over the video. 'We have this widget in red, blue and black. Please click the link below to buy it.'

But we understand that it will come down to a battle of creativity vs. how much time you have to make videos. If you decide to really invest time into making an awesome YouTube channel and dedicate a lot of time and energy into it (and yes, it will take a lot of time and energy), you may find this will be your go to marketing source for years to come. In our opinion a YouTube channel is as powerful as having your own Cable television channel.

Trust us though, it's all well worth the effort. For example, Luxy Hair who sells hair extensions online has built a [million dollar](#) business primarily off the back of providing helpful and engaging content on YouTube.

In general, some categories of content for you to consider are:

- *Educate* – Chances are you know a lot about your products and the world surrounding them. Produce videos such as visual buyer's guides, compare and contrast demonstrations, and 'how-to' videos.
- *Solve Problems* – One of the main reasons people conduct searches on YouTube is to find a solution to a problem. Instructional videos always make great video content. You could probably go on for years showing your customers how to solve problems through videos.
- *Interview Professionals* – In some cases, great content can be created by interviewing professionals in your industry. If you're in a sporting goods industry, usually interviewing professional or even amateur athletes can make great content. But even professionals in woodworking or cosmetic industries have very valuable things to say to your audience.
- *Describe Phenomenal Products* – If you have some truly newsworthy products in your inventory, then go ahead and create videos explaining the amazing features of these products.



Keep your introductions short and get to the point. It's a common mistake to produce long and dramatic branded video introductions. By all means brand your introductions by displaying your logo within the first few seconds on your video but get straight to the point. Get to your message quickly - no longer than 3 seconds into the video.

Studies have found that people's attention spans drop off very quickly when watching videos. So don't have really long videos. Try to keep them below two minutes in length unless you are producing an educational video. Either way, video content is one sure way to rake in that first sale.

TWITTER

Spark Conversation on Twitter!

Twitter can be a powerful tool to help online store owners grow their business. Without investing too much time or money, you can easily drive traffic to your ecommerce store. It's also a great way to engage with your customers once your business is up and running.

But before we get into how you can use Twitter to make some sales, let's first talk about some important account setup housekeeping.

Setting Up Your Twitter Account the Right Way

Profile Photo:

You should make your profile avatar your business logo. When it comes to branding, it's important to be consistent across all your online properties to avoid confusion.

Your Bio:

This is the perfect location for your company tagline or value proposition. Keep it short and sweet and don't be afraid to have some fun.



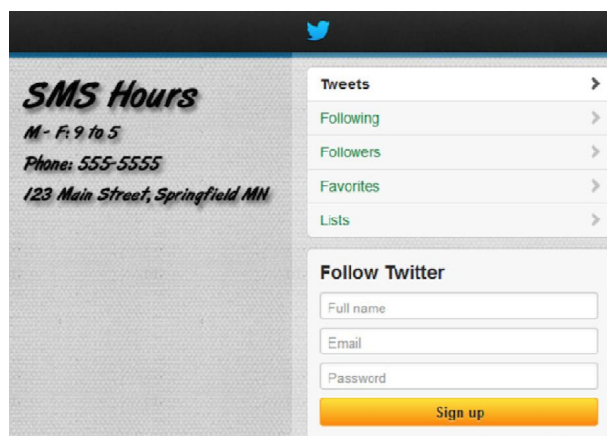
Black Milk Clothing uses the tagline of 'Give me nylon or give me death.' It's fun, concise and quickly describes the company's vision statement while connecting their community with a single anthem that unites them.

Your Website:

Always link to your homepage in your Twitter bio section.

Your Background:

Backgrounds can be used in many useful ways. You can either choose to use large branded artwork or provide an image that displays contact or support information. If you have design resources, go nuts and create something beautiful. But if you're running on a budget or time constraints just keep it simple. A plain background is just fine, or you can add some information about your business.

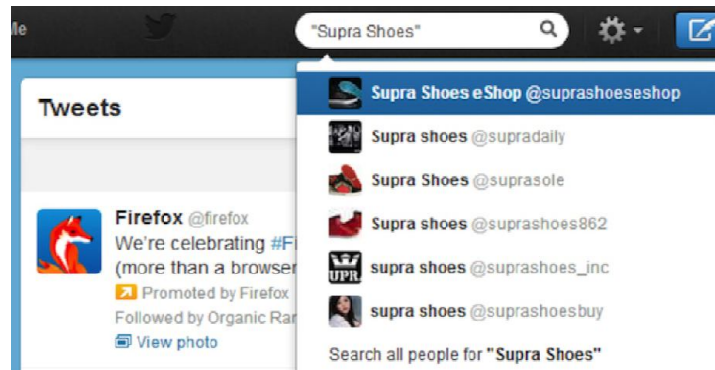


In this example, we're showing some basic contact information placed in the upper left hand corner of a Twitter background.

Direct Engagement

Twitter has an amazing real time search feature. You can listen to anyone's Twitter conversation - a feature that can help you increase sales. Here's an example, let's see who is talking about Supra shoes:

Simply type 'Supra Shoes' into Twitter's search field:



The result will be a real-time result of people that have mentioned the word 'Supra Shoes' in their Twitter conversation(s).

Results for "Supra Shoes"



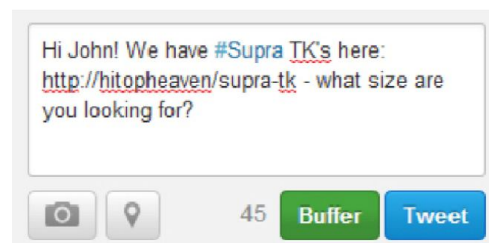
Tweets Top / All / People you follow

This will display almost everyone that has tweeted about Supra Shoes. At this point you can scour the results and pick someone to have a conversation with.

Here are some things you can approach them with:

- *Offer coupons* – If you find someone who has just purchased a similar product that you sell, you can offer them a coupon for the next time they are in the market for a similar product.
- *Ask them about their purchase* – If they have just purchased an item you sell, you might want to ask them about their experience to learn why they bought from your competitor. If they bought it from you - thank them and see how they're enjoying the product.
- *Send them links to your products* – If you discover someone discussing their interest in a particular product, feel free to send them a link to what you have to offer.

You might want to include a hashtag of the product brand name in your tweets. This will allow people who search for the hashtag to find you among results easier. For example:



You only want to do direct engagement a few times a day. It can be considered spam if you do it too much. As a matter of fact, we highly encourage that you read through Twitter's spam policies.

Whatever you do, don't spam every person that mentions one of your products on Twitter with links to your product pages. That's a gross misuse of Twitter and is considered spam. It will make you an awful human being.

Listen and Converse

If you read almost any blog post about how to use Twitter effectively for your business, the most common advice is that you need to 'listen'. Most of these articles write about how to listen if you're an established brand.

The idea is to engage people on Twitter who are talking about your brand and respond to them appropriately to build customer loyalty.

For someone just starting out you want to listen in a different way. Chances are no one is talking about your online store just yet.

So what do you listen for?

Use Twitter as a public platform to show that you are an authority and genuinely help people.

- *Solve problems and lend help* – Listen in on people who might be having problems that you can help out with. Think of keywords that might indicate that someone is having a problem that you can solve, and type them in the search field. By helping people solve problems, you can build your follower count with people who are active in your industry. This will make them more susceptible to becoming future customers.
- *Discuss the current state of your industry* – By joining in on conversations surrounding industry events, changes and news, you can establish yourself in the 'who's who' of your niche. This will open the doors for partnerships, networking and as a business that happily accepts referrals.
- *Show brands that you like* – If you sell multiple brands, you can always show off brands you like and give the brand a little mention by using the '@' and '#' characters.

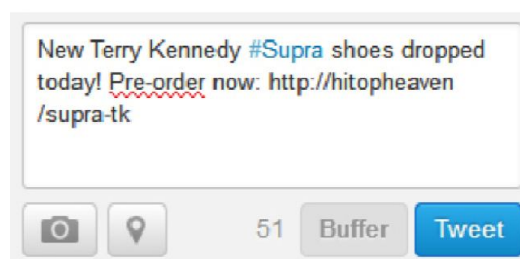
Not only does this publicly announce that you carry these brands, you'll also strengthen your relationship with them.

Share Interesting and Useful Content

The single most powerful thing Twitter is good for is to disseminate valuable or interesting information. Based on your niche you should tweet out articles, pictures and videos that your audience will enjoy. This is a great way to start up conversations with other Twitter users who are interested in the same type of things your online store offers.

For example, if you operate an online surfing shop, you would want to tweet out links to videos of amazing surfing clips a few times a day as well as amazing surf photographs.

Occasionally throw in a tweet about some of your most enticing offers with links to the product page. And as always, throw in a hashtag representing the keyword or brand name.



Finally, you may want to tweet out coupon codes. They may get picked up by Twitter searchers and spread like wildfire.

How to Behave on Twitter

The general rule of thumb in the world of social media is to not overly promote your business. Think of communities like Twitter and Facebook as online cocktail parties. You wouldn't bust into the middle of an ongoing conversation with an opening like: 'Visit Hi-Top Heaven for the best deals on hard to find hi-tops, sneakers and today's most fashionable trends!' Instead, you would gradually start a conversation and let what you do unfold naturally. As you start to build a following you'll experience the profitable benefits of followers first hand. In fact, a follower is 72% more likely to purchase from you. One more reason to keep your eyes peeled to your newsfeed.

PINTEREST

Inspire with Pinterest!

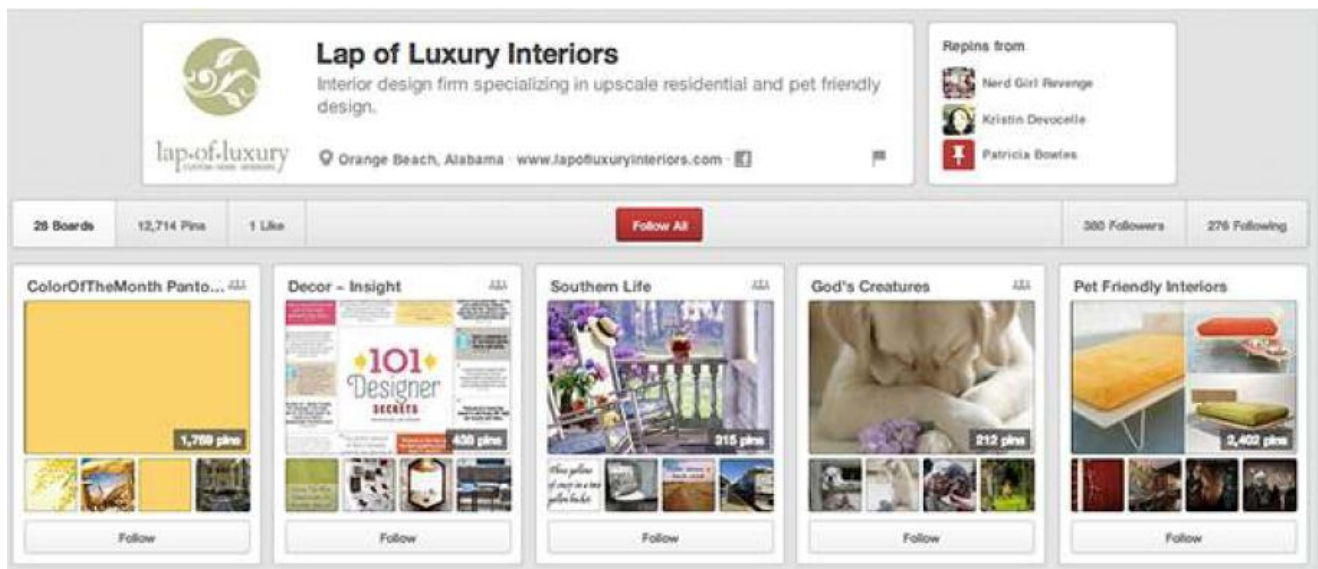
Pinterest is a great new visual social platform that is increasingly becoming a powerful source of customers for online store owners. Since it's primarily a visual experience, it's a great place for your product photos to shine. However, you must have a few creative bones in your body to get it to work. The effort is well worth it though, especially considering that visitors referred from Pinterest are 10% more likely to make a purchase from you.

Creating an Account for Yourself and Your Business

This is an important distinction and you're going to want to do both. As the founder of your company your social network will be interested in what you have to pin. Additionally, you should create a Pinterest account for your company.

<https://www.pinterest.com/business/create/>

The goal here is you can double down on your Pinterest activities by being both an individual user and business on Pinterest. You'll quickly find the limitations of both and surely will want to take advantage of both account types.

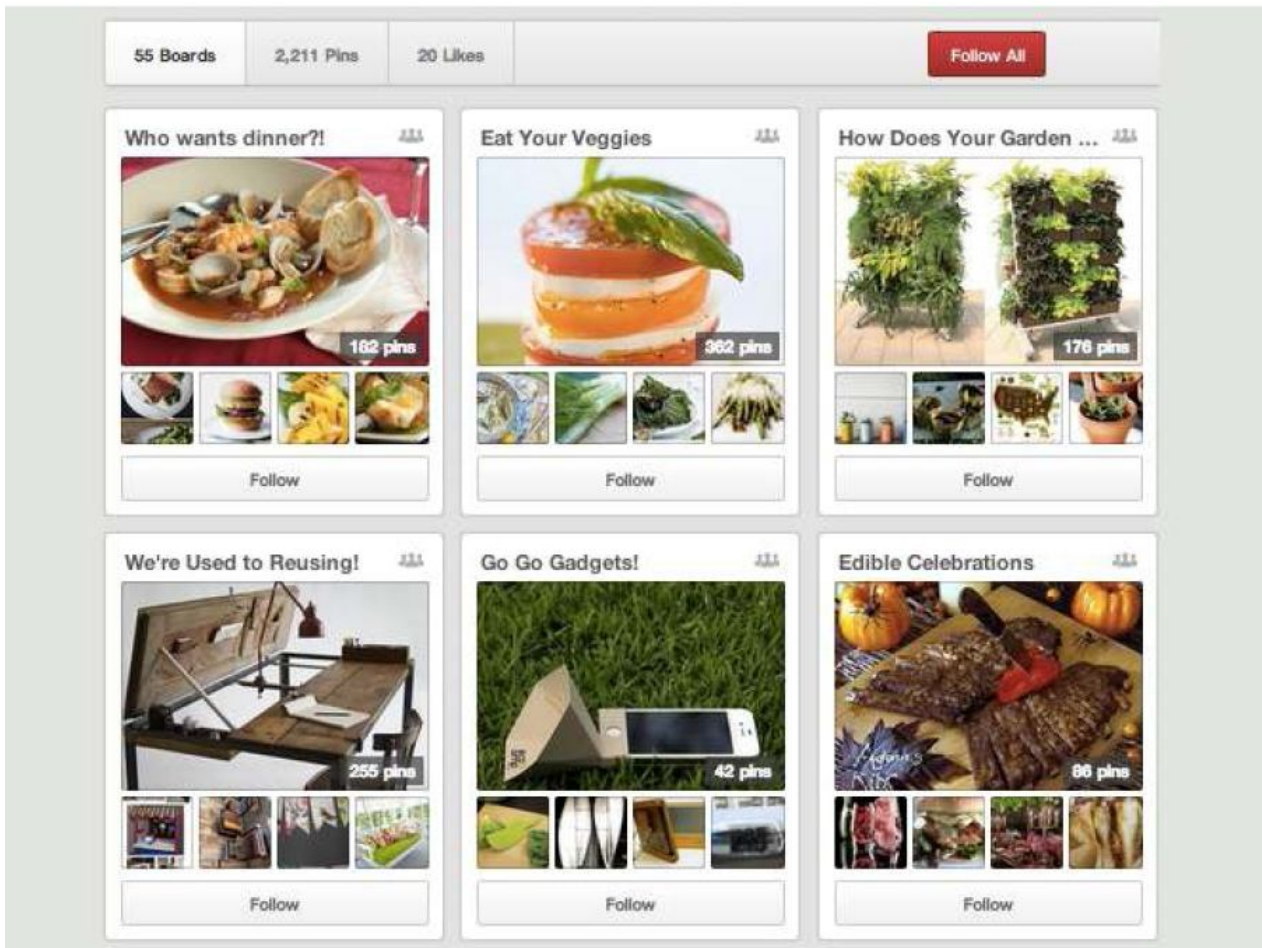


Creating 'Smart' Boards

When you pin an image in Pinterest, you can assign it to a 'board'. It's better to create boards that focus on a specific theme. For instance, if you run an online surfing shop, you might want to create one specific board on '1960's Longboards' and another called 'Classic Fishes' (fishes being a specific retro surfboard shape).

It turns out that when you assign themes to your boards, you tend to attract more interest. To give you some ideas for your online store, you could create boards representing:

- Holiday gift ideas; Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day etc.
- Back to school
- Specific themed vacations
- Clothing ensemble themes
- Gifts for your boyfriend



When you get really popular you can let your customers contribute to your boards.

Adding Prices To Pinned Images

For certain items that are always in stock, you might want to add a price to your pin of that image. To add a price simply add the price with a '\$' sign and corresponding value in the description.

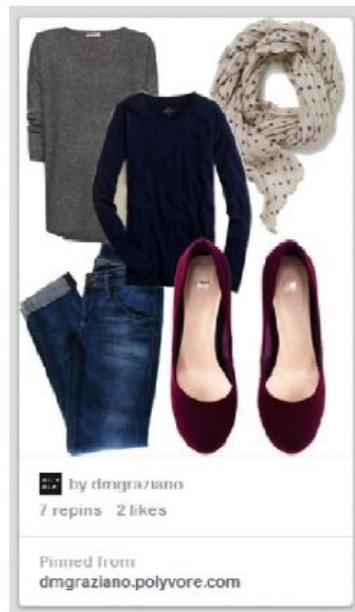


We want to reiterate that it's important that you only add prices to pinned products that are regularly in stock. The last thing you want to do is have people coming from Pinterest disappointed that the items they so excitedly saw on your board is out of stock.

Your Strategy Should Be To Inspire

The power of Pinterest lies in its ability to get people to discover amazing images, videos and products. Instead of just plastering your Pinterest boards with product images, your goal should be to inspire potential customers with the products you sell.

If you're an online fashion boutique, it's all about presenting your clothing in a way that gives potential customers an idea for an ensemble they would want to create.



The above ensemble was designed to give fashion ideas to Pinterest visitors. Try creating groups of products that can inspire potential customers. If you're good at creating these groups, you'll strengthen your brand's authority in your niche.

Other Crafty Things You Can Do with Pinterest

- *Create a testimonial board* – If you receive hand written testimonials from customers, snap a photo of them and pin them to a dedicated board for testimonials.
- *Use hashtags* – Just like Twitter, Pinterest allows hashtags. For specific subjects, be sure to use hashtags. For example, if you run an online store specialising in women's dresses you might use hashtags like: #formalwear, #prom, #fallfashion.
- *Host a contest* – You can promote a contest where your fans and followers can create boards about your brand or around the products you sell. This is a great way to generate interest in your brand and get other Pinterest users involved.

There are probably a thousand or more ways to spin your [Pinterest marketing](#) to generate online sales. However, the best way to find out is to get your hands dirty and start pinning, start generating traffic, and the more visitors you get, the more likely one of them is bound to give you your first sale.

INSTAGRAM

Work It on Instagram!

What makes Instagram so popular is that it's basically Facebook boiled down to its single most engaging function: sharing photos. Throw in some brilliant photo filters and you've got one of the fastest growing online communities to date. And of course, Instagram is also a great marketing tool for your business with a lot of potential for getting you that first sale. So, let's discuss just how you and your business can benefit from Instagram.

Delight the World with Your Photos

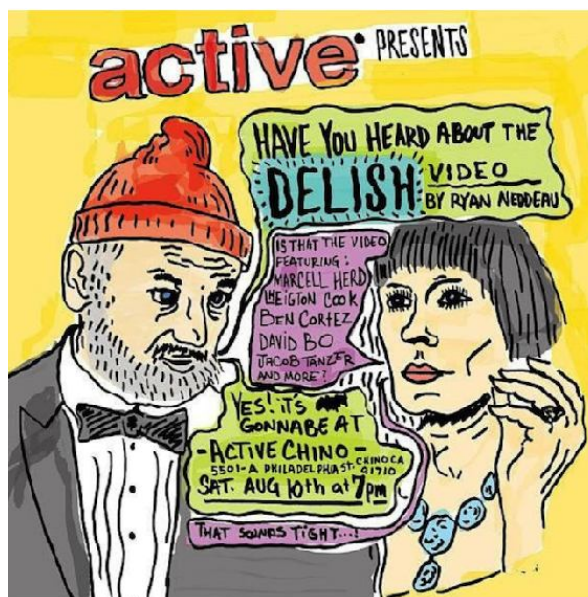
The whole point of 'Instagramming' is to take photos that will generate some sort of positive and viral reaction. The worst thing you can do on Instagram as an online retailer is to upload thousands of white-background product pictures and hope to get tons of traffic.

Boring!

No one will follow, like or comment on an account that does that.



Here is another great use of Instagram – [Active Mailorder](#) (an online action sport retailer), uses Instagram in this upload to advertise an upcoming video premier at one of their shops. The artful and comedic execution is something to take away.



How to #Hashtag

Knowing how to 'hashtag' is key to getting more exposure on Instagram. It's a great way to attract people from all over the world to your account page. The key to 'hashtagging' though is to use a mixture of broad and specific terms for your hashtags.

For example, say you posted a photo of your best-selling limited edition Air Jordan basketball hi-tops, you might want to use the hashtags: #kicks #sneakerheads #jordans #airjordan #ballin #hi-tops #sneakers #nike.

If you ran an online kayaking store, and you posted a photo one of your sponsored kayakers doing some amazing whitewater kayaking you could use the hashtags: #kayaking #extremekayaking #snakeriver #kayak #rapids #whitewater #class5. You would also include the name of your sponsored athlete as a hashtag.

Keep using 5 - 10 appropriate hashtags and you'll notice people increasingly liking your photos.

Photo Tips

Instagram doesn't let you link to your online store from individual posts (they only allow you to link to your bio). So you have to be clever about how you get people to know what you do.

One way to get people to your store is to watermark your images with your domain name:



One thing to keep in mind about Instagram is that it will crop your images into a square. So if you are going to watermark your images, be sure that you don't put your domain name in any corner of your photo. Take a look at what happens to the photo above once it's cropped into a square:



The next thing you may consider testing is to put coupon codes on your photos.



Frequency

You should be conscious of how often you post on Instagram. The general rule of thumb is to only post a few times a day. However, some people are very successful posting once an hour. In these cases, these posters are successful because they have exceptionally good image content.

You'll have to test to see what works best with your audience. Keep track of your follower count closely. If too many people start to unfollow you, then it's probably a good idea to tone down your posting frequency a bit.

Run a Contest with Instagram

Instagram is a great tool to build buzz around your product which not only can help your brand go viral, but also lead to that holy grail of that first sale you're after. Getting started with running a contest on Instagram is pretty simple:

- Choose an incentive (prize)
- Pick a campaign hashtag
- Create a contest 'theme'
- Aggregate and display the photos online

Incentivizing your Instagram account through contests is a fantastic way to build engagement and build a loyal following who'll have no problem spreading the word about your products for you.

A Final Word About the Secret to Instagram

Though it may appear to be just a mobile photo sharing app, Instagram is being used by small and large brands alike to generate enormous amounts of sales. For example, Black Milk Clothing uses Instagram to create user-generated content it then adds to its product pages.

BlackMilk FREE Standard International Shipping REGISTER LOGIN CURRENCY \$0.00 AUD

SHOP ▾ HALLOWEEN HOGWARTS STAR WARS MIDDLE EARTH SESAME STREET MASS EFFECT ABOUT MUSEUM BLOG SEARCH

ART NOUVEAU LEIA DRESS - LIMITED
\$85.00 AUD
Slave Leia Art Nouveau. You're welcome.
Composition: 82% Polyester, 18% LVCRA®
Washing: Please hand wash cool.
Designer: James Lilla
Made in Australia

XS
S
M
L

Add to Cart View styling options

Shipping Rates Sizing Chart

Australia (Domestic)	
Express Post	FREE
All other countries (International)	
Courier	\$18.00 AUD
Standard (Not Avail. in All Countries.)	FREE

Please note: Customers outside Australia may also be liable for any customs and import duty, quotas, permits, product restrictions and other local requirements.

Pricing is based on 1-10 garments, larger orders require a custom quote.

Tag your photos using #bmstarwarsartnouveauleidress on our Facebook or Instagram. How do I tag pics?

Use Instagram with the intent to engage your followers with something fun, entertaining and eye-catching. Otherwise, you'll end up putting mediocre content out there that won't attract interest from others, much less their hard-earned cash for your goods.

TUMBLR

Tap Into Tumblr!

Marketing with Tumblr is a lot like marketing with Instagram. The idea is to wow people with your images and attract a large and loyal following that will not only purchase your products but become evangelists for your brand. And just like with all social media communities, what you don't want to do is overly promote all the time. To be successful on Tumblr means you have to master the art of posting creative and inspiring content that makes an emotional connection with people.

Here's how to use Tumblr to bring sales to your ecommerce store.

Creating a Tumblr Name and Picking a Specific Theme

Before you blindly sign up for your Tumblr account spend some time strategizing your marketing angle. You should really make your Tumblr blog ultra-specific and highly thematic. This will help make your Tumblr blog resonate more with people which will create more viral shares, backlinks and followers.

There is no point in rebuilding your own company blog on Tumblr – you should use Tumblr as a very creative offshoot for your brand. This will keep the content unique and attract die-hard followers.

Plan ahead by writing down 10 to 20 posts that can solidify your theme. Ask yourself: 'Will I be able to consistently come up with content that fits with my theme?' If the answer is 'yes', then you're ready to create your account. If not, ask some trusted peers – they might have some great ideas.

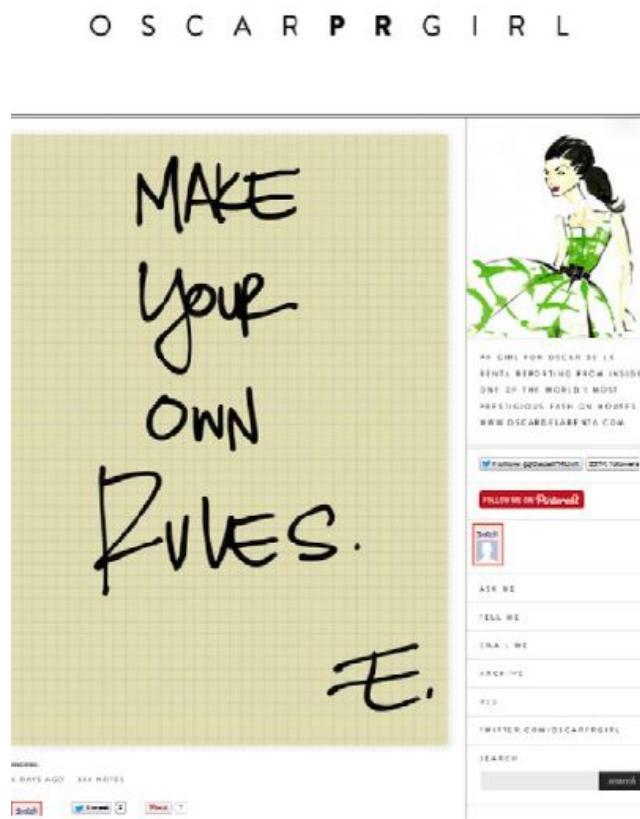
When you create a Tumblr account, you're going to do something a little out of the ordinary. You're going to want to name your Tumblr blog something creative, most likely without including the name of your business in it.

For example some popular Tumblr blogs have names like:

[OCD](#): Obsessive Corgi Disorder. A blog of Corgi dogs.

[Awwccupy Wall Street](#): A Tumblr blog that showcases the Occupy Movement's cutest protesters.

[Oscar PR Girl](#): A Tumblr blog that takes you behind the scenes of the Oscar de la Renta fashion brand.

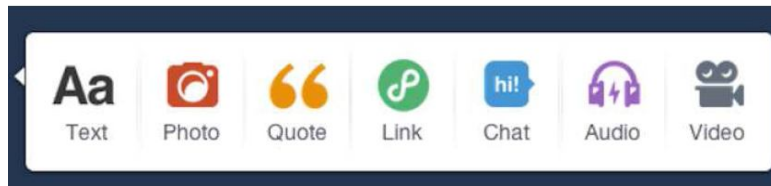


Oscar PR Girl is a Tumblr blog that shows a behind-the-scenes look into the Oscar de la Renta designer brand.

Again, spend time thinking of a fitting name before you rush into creating your account. The payoff might be several-fold if you're somewhat patient.

Adding Content and Tagging on Tumblr

As a micro-blogging platform, Tumblr is a lightweight platform that lets you add content almost as quickly and seamlessly as writing a tweet on Twitter. Simply select the icon describing the type of content you want to add and you're good to go.



Like Instagram, you can attract more people to your Tumblr blog by using tags effectively. You should pick tags that not only describe what your picture is about, but also think about categories and themes your photo may be associated with. For example, if you upload a stunning photo of a dog catching a Frisbee at the beach (let's say you operate a pet toy store), you might want to use tags with the names of: pet toys, super dogs, dogs, summertime, jumping dogs, Frisbee.

There is a loose rule of thumb that you shouldn't use more than 7 to 12 tags on Tumblr. Not only does it seem to bring in the most optimal number of traffic to your blog, but any more is considered spamming.

How Tumblr Fits in Your SEO Strategy

One great reason to use Tumblr is that you can strategically try to rank on the first page of search engine results by creating keyword rich titles for your Tumblr posts. Say you already rank on the first page of Google for 'Neon Green Tennis Shoes', you could try to claim more first page real estate by creating a Tumblr post called 'A Collage of Neon Green Tennis Shoes'. However, you wouldn't duplicate the content that's on your original blog post. You would instead create an entire new post, but have the same keyword in your Tumblr title (Neon Green Tennis Shoes).

You can use this same strategy for many of your social media and blogging accounts that you may be using across the Internet.

Tumblr also allows you to create meta descriptions and image alt tags. Remember, meta descriptions are the little snippets on search engine result pages that live under your page titles. It's a good idea to craft a couple of engaging sentences to try to entice search engine users to click on your results.

Be sure to fill out your image descriptions (alt tags) for your Tumblr photos. These image descriptions are what search engines use to understand what your images are about. By filling out these descriptions, your images will appear in image search results like Google Images and Bing Images.

Getting the Cool Kids to Buy

The majority of Tumblr users fall under the category of 18-34 years in age, which means it's a young crowd that's too cool for Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter. So if you want to capture their attention and get them to visit your store in hopes of turning them into customers, create content that resonates with them and popular culture. If you can do that and crack the code for going viral, you're sure to generate enough buzz to not just get your first sale, but ultimately build that business of your dreams.

YAHOO & BING

Yahoo & Bing Network!

Since you're running an online store, buying ads on the Internet must seem like a pretty obvious way to make your first sales. And this is true – it's just that depending on your industry, online advertising has become hyper-competitive.

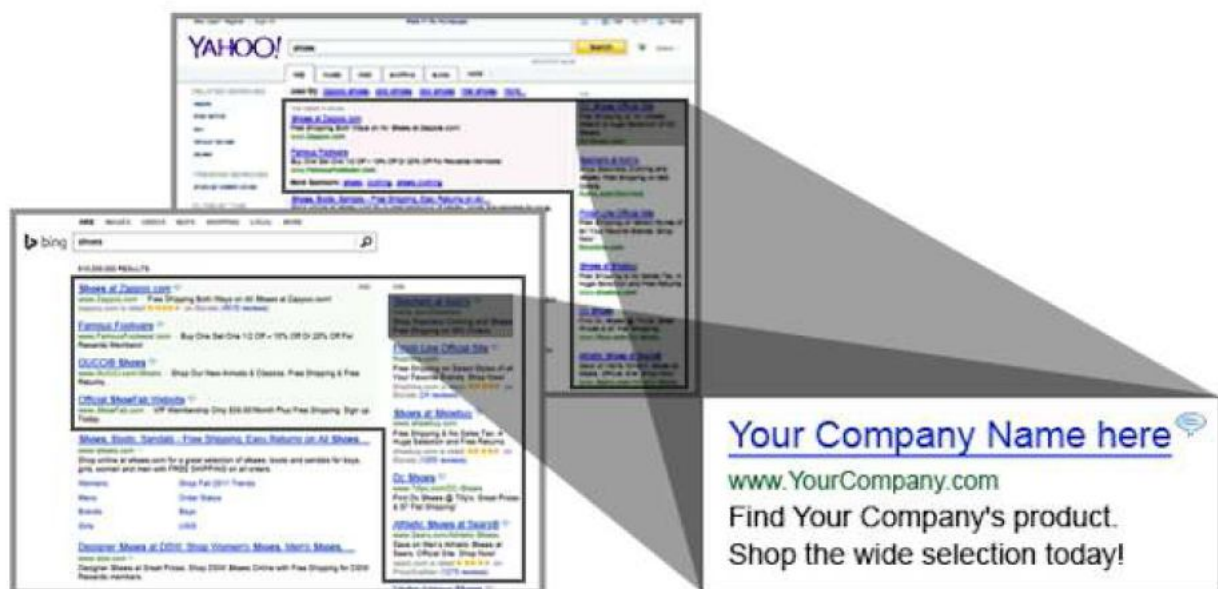
Now, if we had written this guide in the 1980's – we would have told you to put a small ad in some magazines, do a few trade shows and call it a day. But boy, how things have changed.

Nowadays, the obvious places to buy ads can take you for a wild ride, leaving you penniless at the end of the ride. And that obvious place we're talking about is Google.

Google revolutionized advertising by providing the first 100 percent measurable (well almost) advertising platform known to humankind with Google Adwords. Combining the fact that you can know your exact ROI (return on investment) and Google's massive search volume, Google Adwords has become a very competitive place for online businesses to spend their advertising dollars.

And that's why we're pointing you in the direction of a slightly less competitive, cheaper and friendlier network: The Yahoo Bing Network. If you are choosing to use paid advertising, you may like to consider this as an alternative.

Why is it Called The Yahoo! Bing Network?



At one time, each of these search engines/online mega-communities had their own individual advertising networks. And from our personal experiences, we really liked Yahoo!'s advertising platform. It wasn't that competitive and had very reasonable CPCs (cost-per-click).

The only problem with Yahoo! (and especially Bing), was that they just couldn't drive the volume of traffic that Google Adwords did. And that was a problem for people who had found a better return with these networks. Because if you're getting a better bang for your buck, wouldn't you advertise with them more?

At some point Bing and Yahoo! decided to join forces to battle it out against Google. And that's why it has the hybrid name.

What is this Cost-Per-Click Business (paid advertising)?

Most search engines use the cost-per-click advertising model (also called pay-per-click). It's as simple as it sounds, every time someone clicks on your ad, you are charged for the click.

You start your CPC advertising campaign by choosing keywords that search engine users will potentially search for. When they do, your ad will be displayed somewhere on the results page. If you wrote a compelling advertising copy, chances are someone will click on your ad and will be taken to your online store.

The cost of the click is determined by a few factors:

- *Your Specified Maximum Bid* – For every keyword you select to return your advertisements, you are allowed to set a maximum amount you will pay for a click. That way, you can keep your costs under control when things get competitive.
- *Your Quality Score* – Google Adwords was the first to introduce the concept of quality score. Generally, the longer you stay on the network as a paying customer and the better you are at improving your click-through rate (the number of clicks on an ad divided by the number of times the ad is shown), the lower price you will pay per click.
- *The Keywords You're Bidding On* – Some keywords are very expensive per click. Phrases like 'DUI attorney' and 'real estate' can have double digit CPCs. The niche and industry you're dealing with will determine what price range you're looking at.

Hopefully this doesn't sound too overwhelming. This advertising system is really a beautiful thing for businesses. It allows you to thoroughly test your advertising copy, landing page design and advertising concepts – because 30 years ago advertising was no different than throwing darts at a board.

How to Get Started

Now the Yahoo! Bing Network make it pretty easy for you to get going because they want your money. However, we have provided some steps to help you get the most out of your advertising dollars:

Step 1 - Signing Up:

To sign up for the Yahoo! Bing Network, go to the following page; - <https://secure.azure.bingads.microsoft.com/>. You're going to need to have a credit card on hand.

Step 2 - Choosing Keywords:

The first thing you're most likely going to do is come up with a list of hundreds of keywords that you want to bid on. We don't suggest doing this for your first time out. Instead, pick about 5 keywords that reflect the most popular products you sell, and also pick 5 keywords for more obscure items.

For example, let's say you sell iPhone cases. You might sort your list like so:

Popular Keywords and Phrases:

1. Pink Hello Kitty iPhone Case
2. Pink iPhone Case
3. Strong iPhone Case
4. Unbreakable iPhone Case
5. Scratch-Proof iPhone Case

Obscure Keywords and Phrases:

1. Otter Box iPhone Case
2. Otter Box
3. Banana iPhone Case
4. Mr. Potato Head iPhone Case
5. iFoam Case

The reasons we think it's a good idea to make these two types of groups are:

- It will keep your introductory campaign manageable. Too many keywords the first time out will most likely cause you to throw in the towel early. Costs can run up and meager returns will probably be the result.
- You can see what works for you better: a) highly competitive keywords that yield lots of clicks (which are more expensive, but produce more sales) or b) less volume, but highly specific clicks that might produce better ROI.
- Testing and analyzing different advertisements later on is much easier when you are only dealing with ten keywords.

Step 3 - Creating Your Ads:

A common mistake is to make one generic ad to serve all your keywords. Instead make specific ads for each keyword you are going to bid on. In general, the more specific your ad is to the searcher's intention, the higher the click-through rate will be.

There are some important things to remember when crafting your headline and copy:

- Your headline (the first line of the ad), should include the keyword you're bidding on. This generally converts visitors into customers much better because it matches the searcher's intention.
- For your ad copy you might want to consider your unique selling proposition or see what the other advertisers are not saying. You might be able to attract clicks because of what they are lacking.

Step 4 - Choosing Where You Want to Send Them:

Most people the first time out will send their CPC traffic to the home page of their website. As an online merchant, we recommend you send them directly to the product page related to the keyword they searched for.

Let's use the 'Pink Hello Kitty iPhone Case' as an example. Instead of sending them to <http://mymobilephonecase.com> you should send them to: <http://mymobilephonecase.com/pink-hello-kitty-iphone-case>. The purpose of doing this is that the less clicks it takes the person to arrive at a purchase point, the higher your website conversion rate will be.

You can specify where you want your CPC visitors to go by pasting the URL of your choice into the 'destination URL' field.

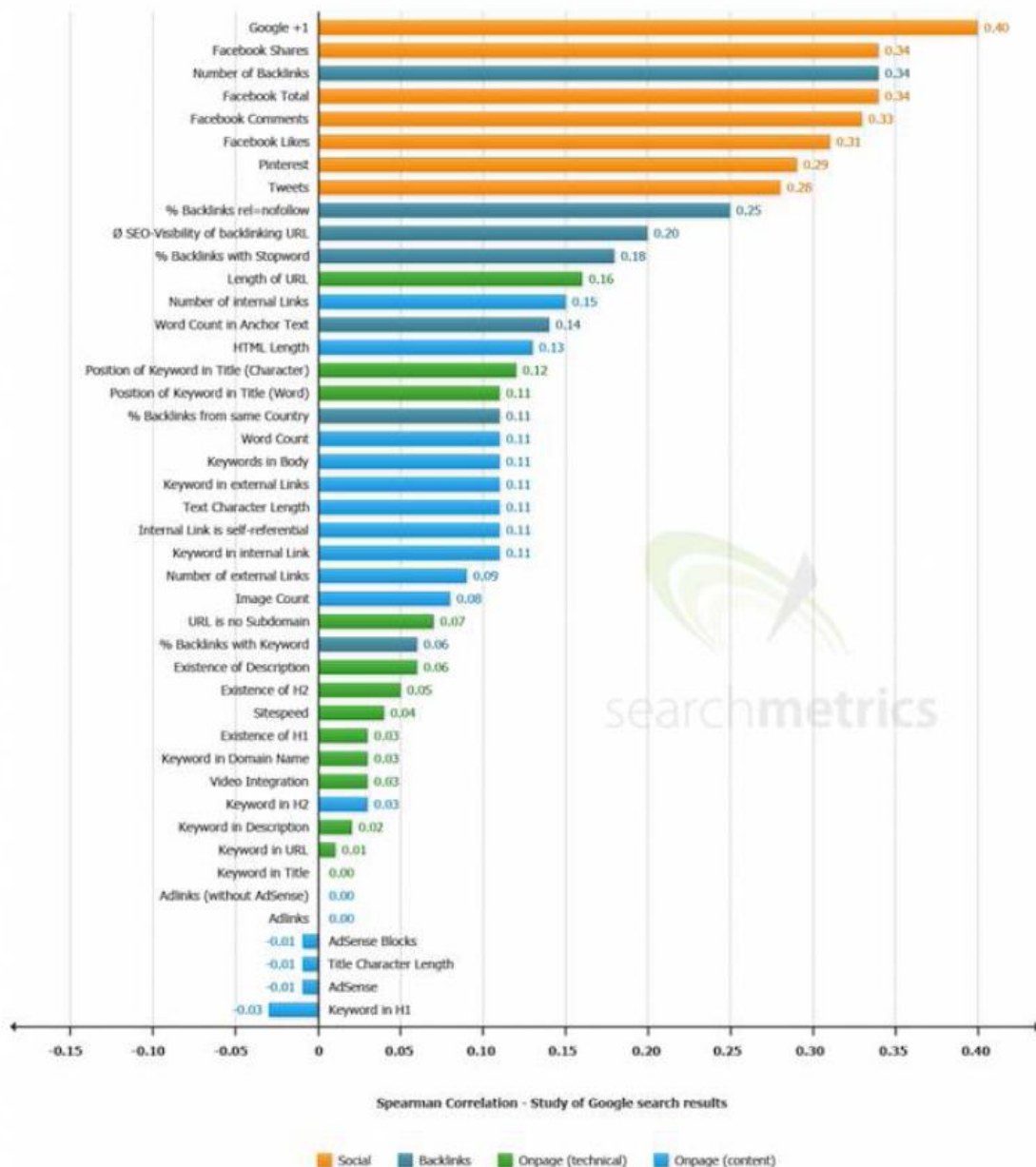
SEO

Search Engine Optimization is considered by some as the holy grail of Internet marketing. If you're lucky and your website appears for all sorts of searches in Google (and other search engines), then you are the blessed receiver of free Internet traffic, which hopefully will bless you with a great deal of sales.

People who come to your online store because of a search query generally want to see what you have to offer. You didn't interrupt their day to get in front of them, they sought you out.

What is SEO? How Does Google Determine Who Shows Up First?

The ability for your online store to appear high in Google's results depends on many (many, many) different factors. A study by Search Metrics ranked various factors that contribute to Google's ranking algorithm:



However, as you're probably just starting out in an effort to nab that first sale, here's a general list of ranking factors in some order of importance:

- How many 'natural' links point to your website from other sites (backlinks)
- The trustworthiness of your website
- The age of your domain name

Let's go over the ranking factors:

Natural Links

When another website links to your website, it's a huge event in search engine optimization. It's such a big deal that people will pay for links. But we don't recommend you buy links, as doing so can get you banned from Google and other search engines.

Since it's such a huge driver in terms of ranking, many businesses fiercely fight for links to their website. There are two ways to get links:

1. Seek out backlinks opportunities. Find places that let you link back to your site and form relationships with other websites so you can effectively ask for a link back.
2. Participating in forums and online blogs where you can include a signature with your website URL and/or promote your business and include a link to your store by means of a sale, discount, work at home mums blog or similar.

It's much more worth your time to build a website that stands out so much, that people all over the world naturally link to it. By making a unique and a remarkable experience, people will want to tell others about it, and that usually means people will link to it.

Better yet, Google's algorithm is tailored to sniff out this type of natural linking and rewards sites that appear more 'organically' popular than sites that look to have been manipulated with links that seem like false endorsements.

So how do you get these natural links? Here's how:

1. *Get online press coverage* – News websites and online journals tend to have some of the most valuable backlinks in the eyes of the search engines.
2. *Be unique in every way* – Whether it's product differentiation, remarkable customer service or awesome return policies. Strive to build a better business than your competitors by offering a more unforgettable shopping experience.
3. *Create valuable and buzzworthy content by having a blog and/or news articles on your website* – Whether it's your product descriptions, your buyer's guides or latest news, good content gets linked to.

Authority

The easy thing about building authority is if you perform the steps in the last section, you're most likely building authority. Authority means your website knows what it's talking about. You are the expert in your niche. There is no better way to do this than to run an unbiased blog, with useful information that isn't trying to sell all the time. Here are a few ways to build authority for your website:

- *Explain how to do something* – Any activity related to your product can have 'how-to' content created around it. Solve your customer's problems and you'll get more customers.
- *Be the expert, not the salesperson* – In order to become an authority, you need to come from a genuine place. You have to stop for a second and communicate to your audience without trying to make a buck. This makes you more credible and trustworthy.
- *Build a strategy to get all the research traffic* – Internet searchers are usually researching something. Think of everything that can be researched in your niche or industry and provide amazing content on it. It's really not that hard to do, it just takes some time to write it down.

Trust

Building trust is pretty straightforward. We're going to assume you're not in business for malicious reasons and you're not planning on baiting and switching people. So, obviously when people arrive on your website, their spam software doesn't blow up with alarms and warnings. There are also a few other things you can do to build trust:

- *Add testimonials* – You can think outside the box when it comes to testimonials. For example you can include tweets from customers and get testimonials from well-respected people in your industry.
- *Provide guarantees* – To show people you mean business, consider devoting a lot of real estate on every page of your site to show a guarantee. Usually, this tells the customer that you're confident in your service to a point that you will go the extra mile for them if anything goes wrong with their order.

The Age of Your Domain Name

The longer your domain name has been around and up, the more history it has with the various search engines. And because of a longer established history, and assuming you've been providing a good user experience for those years, search engines tend to reward websites for good behaviour.

PULL A PR STUNT

As an online retailer you have two choices to go about your day-to-day operation:

1. You can sell stuff.
2. You can build a fun and unforgettable brand with cult followers - and sell a lot more merchandise.

Which would you rather do?

PR stunts are the ancient version of the viral video. They are loads of fun and help bring tons of attention to your brand if executed well. And best of all, they drive tons of links from authority news sources – which is great for SEO.

Now you may not have the nerve to do a PR stunt, but if you think you do then read on.

The Buttons of Buzz

In his book [Buzz Marketing](#), author Mark Hughes lists the six buttons of buzz as:

- The Taboo
- Unusual
- Outrageous
- Hilarious
- Remarkable
- Secrets

When pushed, these buttons get people talking about your brand. You don't have to push all the buttons at once for a PR stunt to work. You just have to nail one of them.

There is no better way to explain these buttons than to go over some examples:

Change the Name of a City



[Half.com](#) was able to change the name of Halfway, Oregon to Half.com for one year. This publicity stunt got the startup business publicity from the New York Times and even the attention of Katie Couric. Changing the name of a city to your brand name would be an example of a remarkable stunt. Remarkable in the sense that people will remark about it to their peers and it will be remarkably expensive.

Vomit and Snot Flavored Jelly Beans

Vomit and Snot Flavored Jelly Beans



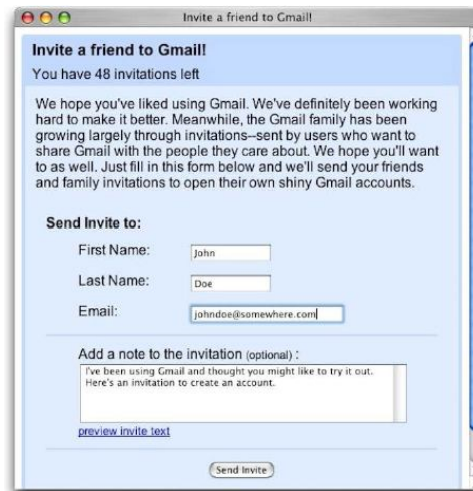
A classic PR stunt done by Jelly Belly was to create [outrageous flavored jelly beans](#) during a certain time of the year. Not only did people actually eat them but even more people told everyone around them about these weird jelly bean flavors.

Get Naked



Italian entrepreneur, Enrico Frare put a full page ad in a Milan newspaper where [he posed nearly nude](#). His message was that every day in Italy an entrepreneur almost loses his shirt. This was his economic commentary pertaining to the difficulty of businesses getting credit from Italian banks during current times. Posing nude is obviously taboo, and when combined with an underlying message, it will always attract attention and more importantly, press coverage.

Invitation Only



Some publicity stunts can run a couple of years and still be highly effective. Facebook and Gmail started off by invite only. In each case, by creating scarcity and a great product – they were able to make outsiders want in. Making secret clubs can be a genius way to create unrivaled amounts of demand. Nike also does this with their SB (Skateboarding) shoes by creating very limited releases that sell for hundreds of dollars a pair.

Why Have Boring Ice Cubes?



And when it comes to hilarious PR stunts, no brand does it better than Virgin. For years the team at Virgin has been pulling stunts like putting Richard Branson looking ice cubes in airline beverages. It's worth spending an evening reading over everything Virgin has come up with – it's a course in itself!

Always Perform a Sanity Check First

If you think you have the world's greatest publicity stunt idea, be sure to run it by some of your trusted friends first. Some publicity stunts can go wrong and may harm your business instead of boosting it.

But Aren't PR Stunts Pricey?

Sure, the examples above are from relatively large brands with big marketing budgets. But that doesn't mean you can't come up with some remarkable publicity on a low budget.

GUEST BLOGGING

Write a Guest Post

One of the easiest ways to get some internet buzz is to write guest blog posts for various websites that are relevant to your niche. The beauty of guest blogging is that most blogs gladly accept guest posts because it helps them keep their content fresh.

The only condition is that you write them a really good post without flat out advertising your own business.

Here's an example:



The Benefits of Guest Blogging

When you write a guest post, you're able to leave a short bio at the end of your post that mentions who you are and what you do. This is the appropriate place to plug your business. So here's the first important tip, if you write an amazing and incredibly engaging post, most readers will want to know about you and what you do.

With that said, guest blogging is only beneficial to those who put 110% effort into their article. If you're just going to gloss over a topic and not provide any real value to the readers, then you'll be wasting your time.

Now, the most obvious benefit is that you'll get to explain to new prospects what it is that you do in your bio. The bigger the blog, the more prospects will get to learn about your business.

There is also a secondary benefit that really helps with driving online traffic and that is the backlink you get to leave in your signature. As we have discussed in previous chapters, search engines use the number of links that point to your website as an indication of how popular your website is and also how relevant it is for certain keywords. In general, the more backlinks you have pointing to your website, the higher you can rank for certain keywords.

Here's an example of a signature:

John Smith is the owner and operator of hi-topheaven.com – rare & vintage hi-tops. He is a basketball fan, freak and fanatic and happens to know EVERYTHING about hi-tops.

How to Write a Good Guest Blog Post

There are a few tricks to writing a good guest blog post that will resonate with readers. Let's go over some of them now.

Write Conversationally

A lot of people will jump into 'school' mode when they attempt to write their first guest posts. And the problem with this is it creates the 'term paper effect'. Basically your article is going to read like an essay and it will just be boring.

When you switch to a writing style that 'talks' to the reader, then you can create more engagement with your words. Use words like 'you' and 'your', and pretend that you are talking in front of an engaged group of real people. Your post will come off much more interesting.

Use Visual Aids

All text and no pictures will make you a boring guest author. Anytime you can use an image or a video to substantiate what you are talking about, you'll add a ton of value to your article.

- *Diagrams* – Communicating visually is by all means a great way to increase the value of your article. Anytime you can use a diagram to make explaining what you're talking about easier to digest – then do it!
- *Video* – Just about any video you find on the internet is able to be embedded into a blog post. You don't necessarily need to know how to embed a video into a blog post, but simply copy the link to the video in your article and let the blog editor know that you want them to embed that video.
- *Don't use stock photography unless you have a reason to* – It's very easy to start plastering your article with images of stock photography. Pictures of corporate people smiling and giving hi-fives, we've all seen it and it just looks cheesy. Occasionally, there is a good reason to use a stock image, but unless you're using the stock image to help explain something – you're better off leaving them out.

Give Actionable Information

The greatest sin you can make when writing a guest post is to simply gloss over a topic. You know, dancing around the details and just giving brief overviews. Your number one priority when creating a guest post is to give the readers as much value as possible. *That's why it's always easiest to write 'how-to' and 'recipe' posts* – they always provide value and you don't have to worry if it will work.

Details

The devil's in the details. Details are a great way to build your credibility with the reader. The more detailed information you can provide, the more they will appreciate your effort.

Leave an Impression, Don't Forget Your Signature

After you burn yourself out writing your first guest post, you'll probably forget to focus on your signature. It's a common mistake. But this is a huge disservice to your business. Follow these tips to get the most out of guest blogging:

- *Change your links and keywords once in a while* – A lot of guest bloggers will use the same signature over and over again. It's a good idea to link to different parts of your website using keywords that best match what those webpages are about. This will help build the SEO up for different parts of your website.
- *Create a Google Authorship Profile* – You will want to get a Google Plus account and learn how to create a Google Authorship link for your signature. This will insert a picture of you in the Google search results when web surfers stumble upon your guest post. Experts have found that results with Google Authorship images next to them get clicked on more often.
- *Give your readers a discount* – You can leave a coupon code in your signature for a special deal. This will help you test the effectiveness of your guest blogging and hopefully drive some extra sales.

Some Final Words on Guest Blogging

Guest blogging may seem difficult at first, but as soon as you get into the groove of it – you'll find that it's an excellent form of online marketing. It builds powerful relationships, boosts your website SEO and builds authority for your brand. Don't overlook this strategy because it has helped many online businesses rise in popularity very fast resulting in a surge in sales that any business would welcome.

We hope that the above ideas and suggestions can inspire you to grow your business and increase your sales. It won't be possible for you to take on-board all of the ideas and suggestions - it's more a matter of picking which ones are right for you.

Best of allexcluding the Bing/Yahoo Network, most of the ideas and suggestions above are available to you absolutely FREE!