

MSP's Introductory Guide

Social Media Marketing and Advertising

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INTRODUCTION

“We don't have a choice on whether we **DO** social media, the question is how well we **DO** it.” - Erik Qualman

This quote says it all. You, the MSP, no longer have the choice of whether to invest your time in social media or not. It is essential to your business. I know you have heard this a million times, but I will say it again, everyone is on social media! There are approximately 1 billion registered users on Facebook. This is roughly 33% of ALL internet users worldwide, and that is just Facebook.

Creating and maintaining your social media accounts is a must. At Gillware, we know this, and we also know that this is way easier said than done. So we put this eBook together to introduce to you to the big four social networks, and how you can use these networks to better market your services. You will learn about setting up a company page, tips for managing a company page, tips for posting, and paid advertising options on each of the big four social networks. These networks are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+.

This eBook will help you jumpstart your social media presence and help you to become relevant in this crowded space.



FACEBOOK

Facebook is the most popular social network platform. With over 1 billion users, Facebook is also the most diverse platform. This presents an interesting opportunity for marketing your services.

By creating a Facebook Business Page and maintaining it, you can increase your reach and relevance. Facebook allows potential customers to search for you and learn more about your services. It is a great platform for connecting to potential clients and customers.



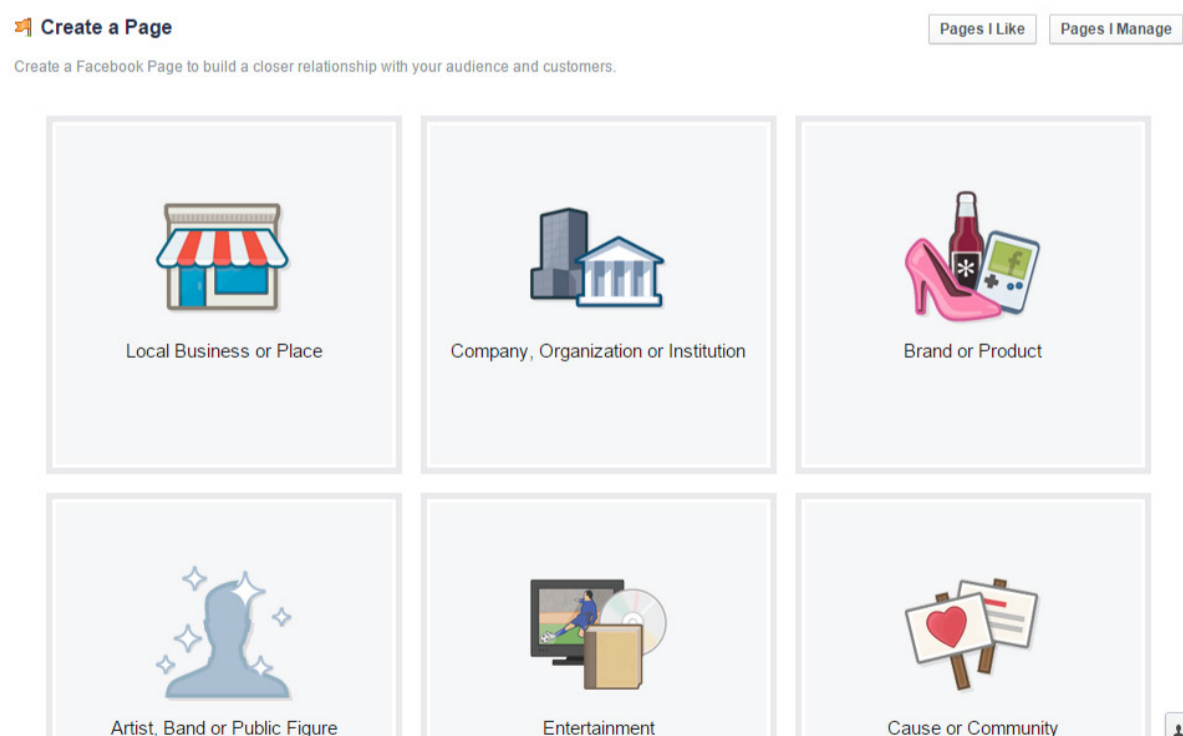
Setting up a Facebook Business Page

1. Choose Business Type

To set up your business page, go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php>. From here, you will be asked to choose from six different types, which are:

- Local Business or Place
- Company, Organization, or Institution
- Brand or Product
- Artist, Band, or Public Figure
- Entertainment
- Cause or Community

Choose your business classification, and then fill out the corresponding information.



2. Fill out Business Information

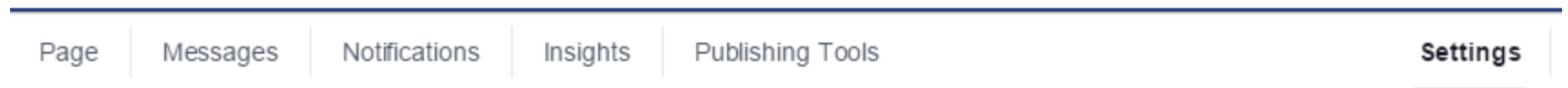
Facebook will walk you through the three basic steps to complete the basis of your Business Page .

The first step is the “About” section. Here you will describe your company in about 2-3 sentences. This description will be on your main page, so be sure to make this information stand out to differentiate your brand from other MSPs. Also include a link to your website in this section.

The second step is uploading a profile picture. This will serve as the main visual icon of your page. It will appear alongside any posts or comments you make. This is usually where your logo will be placed. Also do not forget to upload a cover photo. This is the large, horizontal image that is at the top of your Page. This is usually some type of branded image that compliments your profile picture to help attract people to your Page.

The third step is to reach more people. Facebook will ask you to create an advertisement to reach out to more people and draw attention to your Page. It is important to not create an advertisement at this time even if paid advertising is in your strategy/ budget. You won't have any interesting content on your Page yet, so you won't be able to convince users to “Like” your Page.


3. Use the Administration Panel





At this point, your Business Page is now live, but it is still very basic. Facebook will ask you to “Like” your own Page here. You shouldn't do this at this time because this activity will appear in News Feeds of your personal connections. Again if you don't have any content, your Page is not ready for users to view, even if they are your own personal connections.


When first starting your Business Page, it is important to familiarize yourself with the following administration options: Page Info, Notifications, and Page Roles.


With the Page Info option, you can add additional details about your business. With the Notifications option, you will be able to set how and when you would like to receive alerts about your Business Page. With the Page Roles option, you will be able to invite other team members, if applicable, to be able to make changes to your Page.


-  Page Info


-  Post Attribution


-  **Notifications**

-  Page Roles

-  Apps

-  Featured

-  Banned Users

-  Page Support

4. Post Content

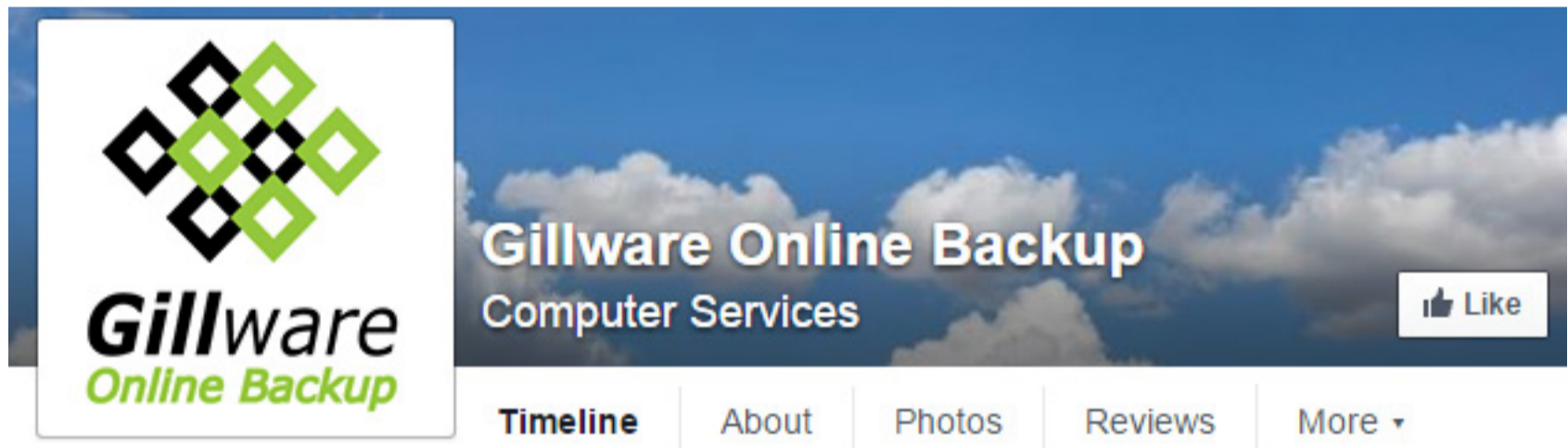
Your Page will ultimately come together over time as you post more updates. You can post an update in six different ways with Facebook. These options are plain text status, photo with a caption, link with a caption, video with a caption, event page, or location check-in. When posting updates on your Business Page, it is important to use a variety of content to keep your page fresh.



5. Invite Users for “Likes”

Once you have enough content on the Page, you can finally “Like” your own page and invite users to “Like” it as well. You have to do this strategically.

Start off with liking your own Page. This will help your personal connections discover your page. Next, invite colleagues to “Like” your Page to build more activity. Then invite known supporters in your network, and encourage them to engage with your content. Lastly invite potential clients since you will now have some activity on the Page. They will see this and become more interested.



6. Measure Growth



Your Page is created and filled with content, so now it is time to measure and analyze your Page’s success. To do this, click the “Insights” option in the top navigation to see your Page’s overview, likes, reach, and visits.



The overview is a 7-day snapshot of your Page's metrics. The "Likes" tab displays your overall fan growth and losses. If you are also using paid advertising options with Facebook, you will be able to see a breakdown of your paid versus organic growth. The "Reach" tab will show the number of people your Page is actually reaching daily. If you have spikes on certain days, take advantage of this and check what you posted that day to see if you can regain that reach. Lastly the "Visits" tab highlights where on Facebook your viewers are coming from.

Posting Tips

1. Post Consistently

When posting content, post it with a purpose. Be consistent with the quality and types of posts you create. This can help people come to expect certain types of messages from you, and how these messages relate to them and your business. I recommend using a content calendar to help you plan your messages to make sure they are similar each time.

2. Target Posts

The more targeted a post or update is, the more successful it is. Determine your audience for each post and create content that caters to that audience. This will help win people's interest in specific ages, genders, job levels, etc.

3. Keep Posts Fresh

Keeping your posts recent and up-to-date will help make your Page more interesting and engaging. To keep your posts interesting and engaging post timely content, test your posts, and respond quickly to comments.

It can be beneficial to post updates on certain topics around the holidays or important events. This will help theme some of your posts and therefore make them more interesting and engaging.

It is always necessary to test and analyze your posts. Find which ones had the highest engagement, and either expand or reframe that post to regain those Page views, comments, likes, and shares.

Lastly be sure to respond quickly to comments. The faster your respond to comments, the more people know you are listening carefully for their feedback.

4. Combine Visuals and Copy

When you are posting, especially with pictures, make sure your copy works well with those photos. It is important to use high-quality photos that represent your company and service. When writing for those high-quality photos, be sure to keep your sentences short but instructive. Your message should be concise and clear about why users should be paying attention to your post. Remember you can take advantage of hashtags here as well.

Facebook Paid Advertising

Reach

It is no surprise to anyone that Facebook is the biggest player in social media. Like it was stated earlier, there are 1 billion registered users (33% of ALL internet users worldwide). There are 699 million daily active users (23% of all internet users worldwide). Yes, that is a lot of users.

Advertising Formats

There are numerous advertising options that Facebook offers, and Facebook organizes these options by objectives, which are Clicks to Websites, Website Conversions, Page Post Engagement, App Installs, App Engagement, Offer Claims, Local Awareness, Event Responses, and Video Views.

Don't get overwhelmed at all these options because each of these objectives can fall under either of two categories, which are the right-hand column ads and the News Feed ads.

Let's first take a look at the right-hand column ads. This format is the most traditional Facebook ad. It will appear on the right side of a user's Facebook News Feed. Even though ads that appear directly in the News Feed are likely to receive higher engagement due to their size and features, right-hand column ads should still be used. These ads often have less expensive clicks and conversions, but for right-hand column ads to work, they must be relevant, have a value proposition, a good visual, and a call-to-action.

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Next let's take a look at the News Feed ads. These ads will appear directly in a user's News Feed, hence the name. These ads usually have a higher engagement rate than the right-hand column ads, but they also can be more expensive at the same time.

These ads are very versatile. You can turn them into video ads and multiproduct ads.

Targeting Options

Facebook may not have as much options available as other social networks, but they are still effective. These options are location, gender, likes, interests, relationship status, workplace, and education.

Cost

Advertising on Facebook is based on the size of your audience and budget. When you first start advertising on Facebook, you will be given the option to advertise with a daily or a lifetime budget. You can enter in the total amount you want to spend as well. The minimum amount you can spend per day is currently \$1.

The type of bidding (Cost Per Click or Cost Per Impression), the audiences you want to target, and your budget will help determine how many users will be able to see and click on your advertisement. The cost of this will all be within your set budget.

Pros and Cons

Facebook offers a great opportunity for small businesses to increase their reach. It is currently the biggest social network, so you know the reach is there. Also with their effective targeting options, you have the ability to efficiently get your messaging across. Facebook advertising is a great way to increase traffic to your website and maximize brand exposure. The diversity of Facebook's audience allows many different types of businesses to benefit from advertising on Facebook, and that definitely includes MSPs.

With all that being said, cost can be a big con for certain businesses. Even though you can customize the costs of Facebook advertising to fit your budget, this type of advertising format might limit the users, you want your ads to reach. Similar to any type of advertising, some ad formats may not have the ROI that businesses are looking for to justify their spending.



Overall Assessment

If you have the budget and can justify the costs, I would highly recommend using Facebook's advertising options. The opportunity to increase your reach is just too high. The fact that there are so many different businesses and people on Facebook allows you to receive more recognition than any other social network. There is nothing else like it. Facebook advertising is a great way to expand your audience and potential customers.



If you don't have Facebook advertising in your budget, don't worry. Create and maintain your Facebook Business Page to establish a presence for your potential customers.

TWITTER

Twitter is known as the second most popular social network platform. It has the most dedicated users. Most people that are on Twitter tweet and use the platform consistently and effectively. This creates a great opportunity to participate in conversations around your industry.

By creating a Twitter account for your company, you can take advantage of its great features to better your promotion, engagement, research, and relevance. Twitter's functions make it a unique platform because Twitter allows you to listen and contribute to public discussions. The more interesting material you contribute to these discussions relevant to your industry, the more website traffic you will receive.



Setting up a Company Twitter Account

1. Sign Up

To sign up for Twitter, simply go to twitter.com and sign up. All you have to do is enter in your information, such as your full name, email address, password, and your Twitter username.

You will also be asked to confirm your account through an email that will be sent to the email you provide.

Join Twitter today.

Full name

Phone or Email

Password

Username

Tailor Twitter based on my recent website visits. [Learn more.](#)

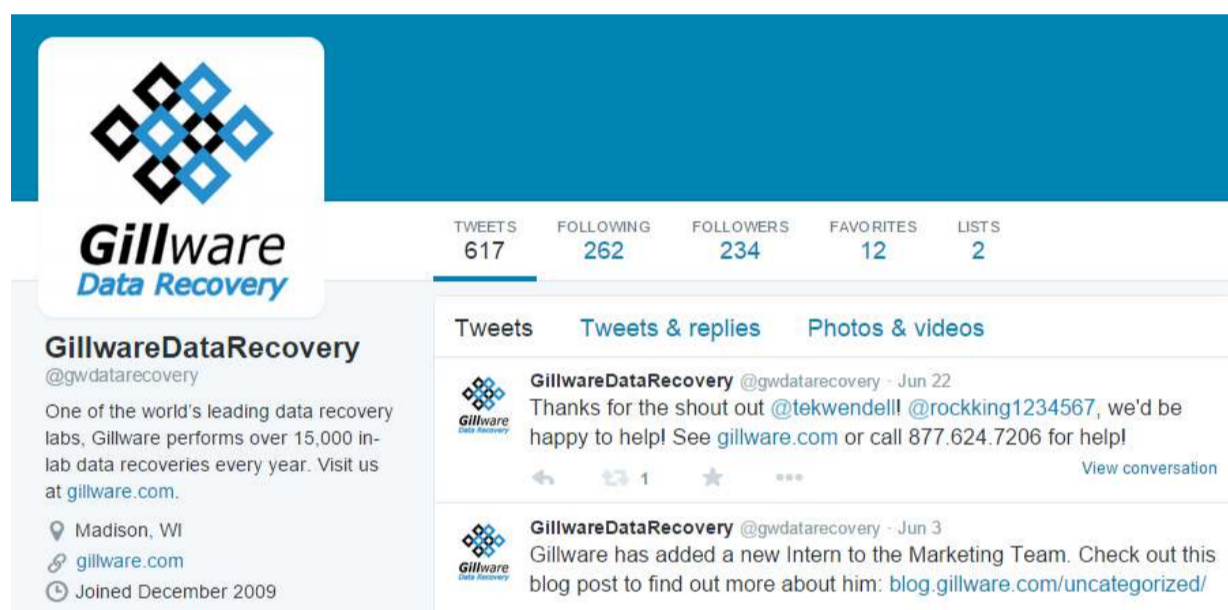
2. Make Your Initial Connections

After you have confirmed your account, Twitter can help you to get started. It will walk you through creating your profile, and it will suggest people to follow. You will be asked to pick five connections. If you don't want to go through Twitter's welcome introduction, you can opt to skip it.

3. Edit Profile Details

It is important to upload two different photos for your profile to give it life and to brand your page. The profile photo should be something that is clear and visible. The header photo gives you more room for creativity. It is a larger image, so it is a good idea to choose something that will capture viewers' attention.

Next, update your general information. This includes your full name, location, website, and bio.



4. Send Your First Tweet

You are now ready to start tweeting. Each tweet can only be 140 characters long, so be concise without being casual.



Tweeting Tips

1. Keep Tweets Short

If your tweet is short and has characters left over, users can easily retweet you without getting rid of any portion of your content.



2. Include Twitter Handles for Retweets

When sharing a stat, article, or quote from a different brand or user, it is important to include their Twitter handle in your tweet. They will be able to see your tweet, and hopefully they will retweet it to their own audience. This in turn can increase your following.

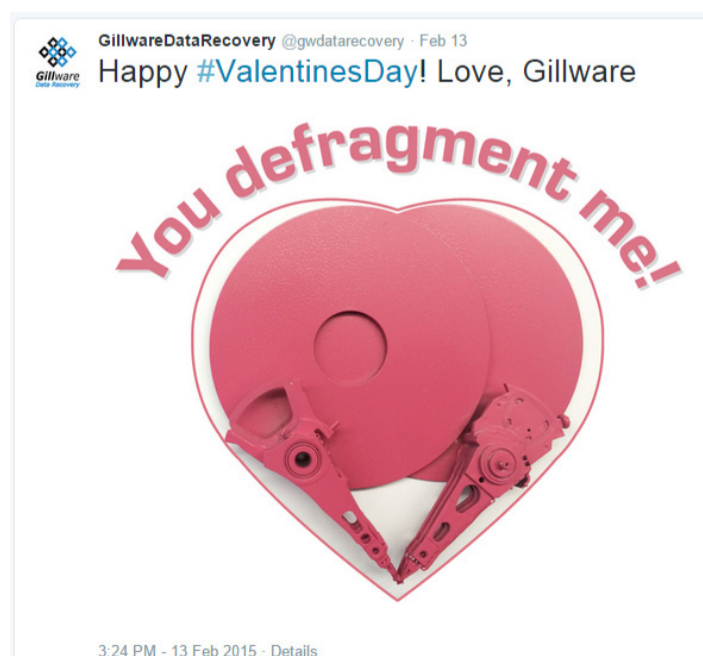


3. Don't Overuse Hashtags

Hashtags are very important when tweeting, but you don't want to include too many in one tweet. Hashtags are used to have your messages or tweets identify with a specific topic or conversation for other users to see. For example, if you include #onlinebackup in your tweet, your tweet will fall under the specific topic and conversation about online backup. Overusing hashtags in a tweet can irritate followers and reduce engagement. I wouldn't use more than two hashtags in a single tweet.

4. Tweet Visual Content

Visual content can differentiate your tweets to keep your tweets fresh. Visual content by its nature is also appealing and more interesting. Tweets with photos receive high amounts of engagement as well.



5. Use Links

It is important to include links that are relevant and direct traffic to your website. These links help serve as a call-to-action. It is best to shorten these links to clear up space and to include them in the middle of your tweet. You can use link shortening websites, such as bitly.com, to shorten your links for you.

Links that are tweeted in the middle of a tweet tend to receive more clicks. It catches the viewer's attention faster, and it differentiates the tweet from all the other tweets that include links at the end.

Twitter Paid Advertising

Reach

Twitter has around 271 million active users across mobile and desktop. Twitter has two different types of users: those who love it and use it all the time, and those who do not get it and don't use it. There aren't many people in between these two types. It is usually one or the other.

Overall Twitter has a dedicated and loyal user base, which makes it an interesting advertising option because you have the opportunity to target a knowledgeable and reliable audience on Twitter.

Advertising Formats

Twitter's advertising formats are straightforward and easier to understand than Facebook's advertising formats. There are three different types of Twitter ads.

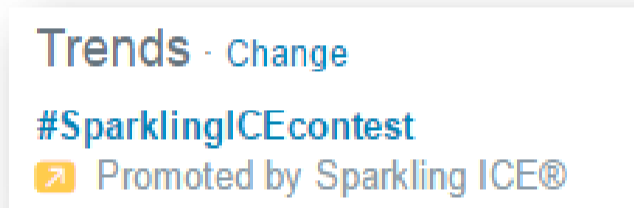
The first is the Promoted Tweet. These ads will appear in targeted users' timelines even if they don't follow you. What separates these tweets from regular tweets is the "Promoted by..." label. Promoted Tweets are useful because you can make use of hashtags and include links to landing pages.



The second ad format is the Promoted Account. These ads will appear under the “Who to Follow” section, which usually appears in the right-hand sidebar alongside other algorithmically suggested accounts. With this format, you can choose to have your account or accounts promoted to Twitter users through a wide range of targeting options. Similar to the Promoted Tweet format, all that separates Promoted Accounts from accounts that are suggested algorithmically is the small “Promoted” label.



The third and last option is the Promoted Trend. Promoted Trends will appear in the left-hand sidebar on Twitter, and they will often be at the top of the currently trending list. The placement of Promoted Trends make this format intriguing and effective. Promoted Trends allow you to reach vast numbers of users, and dominate the conversation around a specific topic.



Targeting Options

Twitter may not have the reach that Facebook has, but its targeting options help make up for that. They are:

- existing followers
- users like your followers
- tailored audiences (cookie IDs, email addresses, Twitter user IDs)
- keyword (search and Timeline options)
- interests (more than 350 subtopics)
- location
- gender
- language
- device



Cost

Twitter has altered its ad costs to make them more similar to Facebook's in the sense that you can set a budget, place a bid, and then run your campaigns. Twitter will automatically stop showing your ads once your budget has been met for that day or campaign, and you won't be charged more than you want to spend. This is the same concept as Facebook's costs.



Twitter's cost per engagements and cost per followers on these advertisements are relatively more expensive than Facebook's. Promoted Tweets can cost between \$.50 and \$2.00 per engagement. Promoted Accounts will run you anywhere between \$2.50 and \$4.00 per new follower. Promoted trends are by far the most expensive advertising platform, and the cost of these are \$200,000 per day.

Pros and Cons

Twitter has a dedicated user base that frequently uses their service. So you know users are going to constantly be on this social media platform. Twitter also offers a wide range of targeting options that allow you to tailor your messaging to very specific demographics.

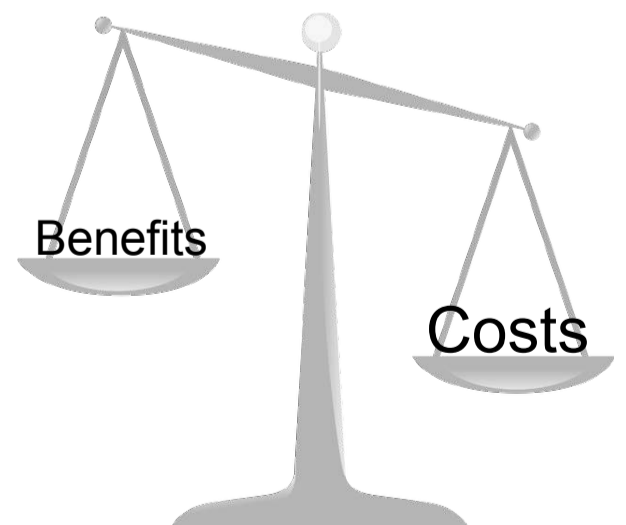
Twitter's Promoted Trends, Accounts, and Tweets are great advertising formats that allow you to reach out to numerous users to promote your account and gain new followers. If users like what you have to tweet about a certain topic, they will likely click on your account, which can lead them to your website.

With all that being said, cost could be a major con here. The cost of Promoted Tweets and Promoted Accounts can range from \$.50 - \$4.00 per engagement. So there could be high potential costs here, but the kicker is with the Promoted Trends. The cost of a Promoted Trend surpassed \$200,000 per day, and this puts this advertising format out of reach for most. Even though you can set a budget for your campaigns, costs can still limit your ROI on these ads.

Overall Assessment

Yes the cost for Twitter advertising is high for ROI, but it is very useful to both promote your accounts and tweets locally and at a larger scale to gain new followers. In my opinion, Twitter's paid advertising options are better than Google+'s and LinkedIn's, so if advertising on Twitter is in your budget, take advantage of its platforms. If it is not, or you are on the fence about it, stray away from Twitter's paid advertising and focus on Facebook's paid advertising.

Either way, I highly recommend creating an account for your company to establish your presence on Twitter. You should consider setting up a Twitter account if you already haven't for four reasons: promotion, engagement, research, and relevance.



Promotion

Twitter is one of the most popular networks for sharing links. If it is done correctly, it can help drive traffic to your website or service pages. Keep in mind, you will need to create interesting content to be shared for this to work.

Engagement

Twitter is not only for self-promotion. It can be a useful platform to interact and engage with your customers. It is important to note that you should involve other content and links than just of your own. If you only tweet out your own links, you could drive potential customers away.

Research

Twitter is an effective listening tool. You can take advantage of Twitter's Lists feature to organize your customers, partners, and other colleagues. This will help you figure out what trends and topics are currently happening. Also, using Twitter's search to see what people are saying about certain topics in your industry will help your marketing and sales strategies.

Relevance

Your customers are on social media just like everyone else, so having a presence on Twitter can make it easier for them to come across your services. With that being said, you have to invest time and effort to keep your Twitter profile up-to-date with content to take advantage of Twitter's benefits.

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional social network, and it continues to grow. LinkedIn Company Pages allow you to build strong relationships with your existing clients and your potential clients. LinkedIn has an affluent and influential membership, which makes marketing on this network necessary. It is an effective option to spread product and service awareness.

Users can search and connect with people that are employed by a certain company. Connections can also be found by the various types of businesses a specific person has worked for. LinkedIn gives you a great opportunity to connect with industry professionals and ultimately generate leads for your business.



Setting up a Company LinkedIn Page

1. Sign Up

To set up a company page, go to company pages and click add a company (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/add/show?trk=biz-module-create-company>). Then you will be directed to enter in your company name and your company email address, so LinkedIn can send you a verification email.

Add a Company

Company Pages offer public information about each company on LinkedIn. To add a Company Page, please enter the company name and your email address at this company. Only current employees are eligible to create a Company Page.

Company name:

Your email address at company:

I verify that I am the official representative of this company and have the right to act on behalf of my company in the creation of this page.

or

2. Assign Page Managers

After you have verified, you can choose which employees, if any, to be your Company Page managers. Those people that you pick must be your LinkedIn connections. Similar to Facebook, you will need a personal LinkedIn profile to make your connections.

3. Fill in Company's Information

When you are done assigning administrative duties, you can start filling out your company's generic information. This includes your company's type, size, website URL, industry, operating status, and year founded. Also don't forget to upload your company's logo and enter in its location.

4. Complete Company's Description and Publish

Another important step is to fill in your company's description. Be concise, but make sure you share what makes your business unique. Include any products or services. Also be sure to add your business's specialties under the "Company Specialties" section. Make sure these are keywords that are related to what your company does.

You can also choose specific groups you want to feature on your company page under the "Featured Groups" section. When you have filled out of all your company's information, you are ready to publish the page.

Tips for Managing a LinkedIn Company Page

1. Post Updates

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How the Monolith Changed the USB Flash Drive Data Recovery Game - Gillware Data Recovery
blog.gillware.com · The monolith has many things going for it, but what protects the drive from the elements also protects the drive from recovery engineers.

Organic
Targeted to: All Followers

283 impressions 8 clicks 1 interaction 3.18% engagement

Sponsor update

Like · Comment · Pin to top · 1 month ago

Posting updates to LinkedIn works similarly to Facebook and Google+. These updates can be for more than just jobs and new hire updates. It is important to use your company feed to promote various content such as blog posts, eBooks, webinars, etc.

2. Create a Showcase Page

Creating a Company Showcase Page allows you to portray your specific products and services. They are pages that are specifically dedicated to a product or service. These pages will help you establish long-term relationships with members that want to follow certain aspects and qualities of your company. It is important to note that these pages should not be used for short-term marketing campaigns.

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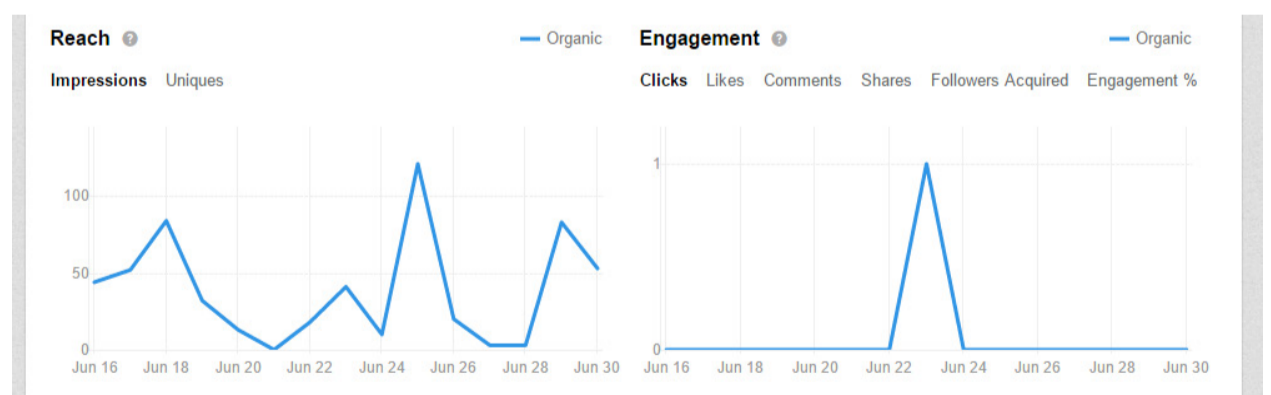
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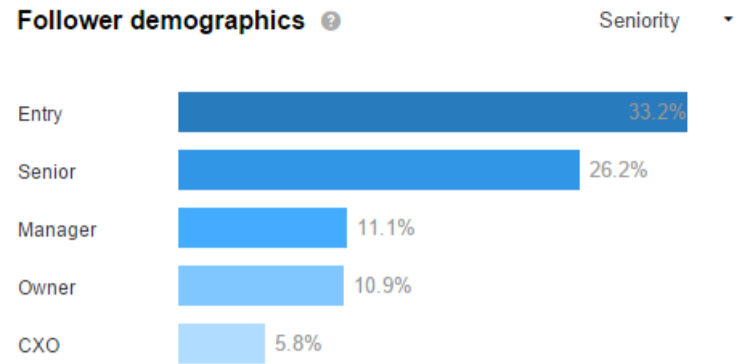
3. View Your Analytics

LinkedIn gives you the ability to track your page's statistics. These statistics include valuable analytics on your updates, followers, and visitors. It is important to follow these analytics to measure what you are doing well with and what you need to improve on.

Under the "Updates" section, you will find insights on each update that you posted. These insights show you clicks, interactions, followers acquired, and overall engagement of each update. You will also find more in depth information about your current reach and engagement.



Under the “Followers” section, you will find statistics on the total number followers, follower demographics, follower trends, and how you compare with other companies. Follower demographics are important because it gives you insights on the job levels of your followers as well as your followers’ industry, company size, job function and whether or not they are employees of your company.



Under the “Visitors” section, you will find overall analytics on how many page views you have had, how many unique visitors (your page viewers that are only counted once during the reporting period) you have had, and your visitor demographics, which can be arranged by job level, job function, industry, and company size.



LinkedIn Paid Advertising

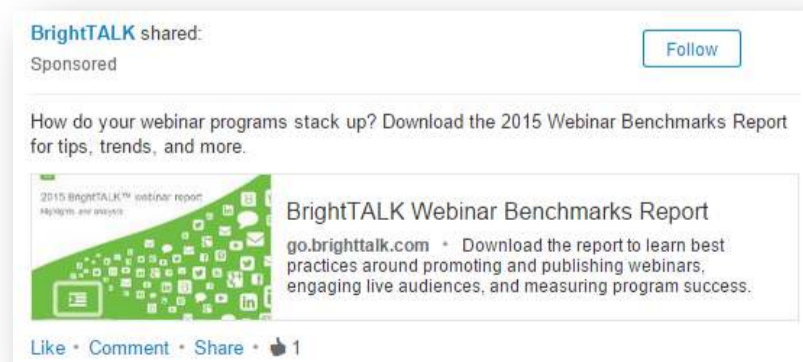
Reach

Overall LinkedIn’s audience is similar to other social networks. There are about 300 million active monthly users. LinkedIn is also growing quickly. Recent statistics say two professionals are joining LinkedIn every second.

Advertising Formats

There are two main advertising formats for LinkedIn.

The first is the LinkedIn Sponsored Update. These sponsored updates appear alongside the content in users’ news feeds. The only thing that differentiates sponsored updates from normal updates is the “Sponsored” label in the top-left corner of the post.

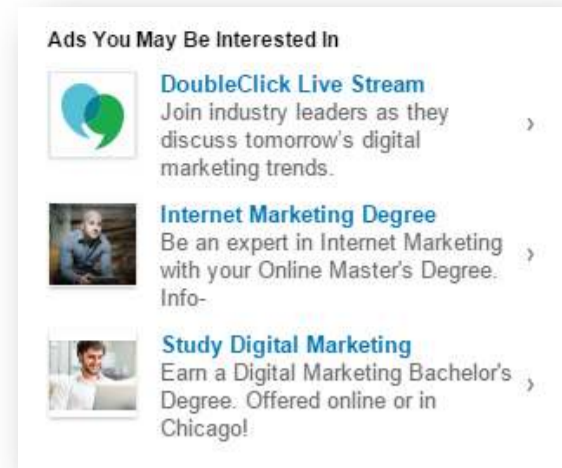


The second advertising format is the LinkedIn Display Ad. They are similar to traditional pay per click ads that are displayed on search engine results pages. These display ads appear on the right-hand side of the screen. They are small ads, and they are typically displayed alongside other ads.

Targeting Options

LinkedIn's targeting options are unique in the sense that these options are best suited for business to business advertising. They are as follows:

- job title
- job function
- industry
- geography
- company name
- company size
- language
- seniority
- age
- gender
- membership of a specific LinkedIn group



Cost

With LinkedIn paid advertising, you can control your costs in two different ways: setting bids, which is the maximum amount you want to pay for each individual click or every 1,000 impressions, and setting budgets, which is the maximum total amount you want to spend per day.

If you chose the setting bids options, there are two different bidding options: pay-per-click (CPC) and pay-per-1,000 impressions (CPM). With CPC, you decide the maximum amount you are willing to pay for each click. After you decide on that amount, you can set a daily budget for those ads. With CPM, you pay a set cost for each 1,000 times your advertisement is shown. This option does not take clicks into consideration, only how many times the ad is shown.

Keep in mind, these options do come with minimum costs. The minimum daily budget is \$10 per day, the minimum CPC bid for LinkedIn text ads is \$2.00 per click, and the minimum bid for Sponsored Updates will vary due to the audience you target. The minimum CPM bid for LinkedIn text ads is \$2.00 per 1,000 impressions, and the minimum bid for Sponsored Updates will again vary due based on your target audience.



Pros and Cons

Two of LinkedIn's biggest advertising advantages are its growing professional audience and all of the options that are available for user targeting. LinkedIn's unique targeting options make this social network platform very useful in business to business markets and in managing business to business relationships.

There are also two main drawbacks of LinkedIn. The first is that LinkedIn's minimum costs of their advertising options are relatively high compared to other platforms. For businesses with a smaller marketing budget, these costs might not allow them to effectively use LinkedIn's advertising options.

The second drawback is that there aren't any remarketing options available. So unlike Google+ and Facebook, LinkedIn does not give you a chance to recapture people that have visited your site before.

Overall Assessment

If LinkedIn paid advertising fits your budget, I would recommend taking advantage of their options. LinkedIn's users are professional, and this gives you a great opportunity to reach out to other businesses and professionals. If your marketing budget is stretched a little thin, and LinkedIn paid advertising is on the fence, I would recommend focusing on other options, such as Facebook's paid advertising. With Facebook, you have a greater opportunity to capture a wider range of users.

I do highly recommend creating a Company LinkedIn Page if you don't already have one. By creating a Company LinkedIn Page, you are allowing your business to do four main things.

1. Growing Your Reach

If you or your employees have included where they work in their LinkedIn profiles, every connection with that profile will be able to see your company name. The viewer could click on your company, and it would take them right to your company's page. Many users can easily find their way to your page just by LinkedIn browsing. Along with that, you and every one of your employees have the chance to promote your company by simply just having a profile.

2. Spreading Product or Service Awareness

LinkedIn Company Pages allow you to create Showcase Pages. These pages are meant to further your Company Page presence by allowing you to create dedicated pages for specific products and services. Showcase Pages allow you to build long-term relationships with members who want to follow specific aspects of your business.

3. Optimizing for Search

By creating and maintaining a LinkedIn Company Page, you will be able to increase your web visibility because LinkedIn jobs do appear in search results. Also, LinkedIn is its own search engine for job and company searches.

4. Generating More Leads

LinkedIn Company Updates allow you to link your content, which can attract leads that are in need of certain resources. Your Showcase Page is able to have a call-to-action as well to further attract leads.

GOOGLE+

Google+ is a relatively unique social network platform compared to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. What makes Google+ unique is its ties with the entire Google Display Network. This means that your advertising campaign can reach more people than you would expect because your ad would be viewable across Google+ and Google's other networks, such as YouTube.

This network provides a valuable opportunity to expand your reach to audiences you wouldn't have even thought of. Google+ provides a certain flexibility and functionality that can't be replicated with other social networks.

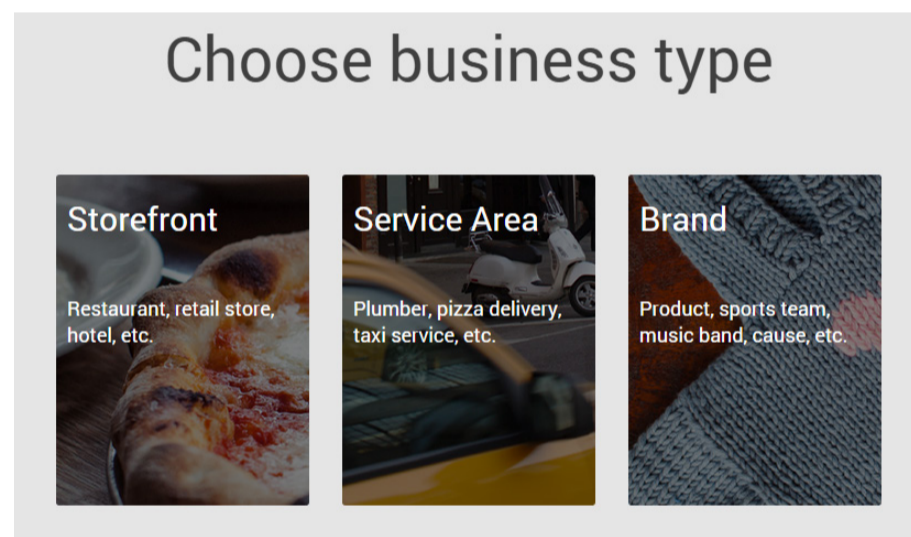


Setting up a Google+ Business Page

Google+ Business Pages allow companies to interact with an audience that continues to grow, and unlike any other social network site, Google+ helps your business reach people that are on other networks and sites. This is due to its incorporation of other Google sites and technologies. Below is a simple guide to help get you set up on Google+ if you haven't already been set up.

1. Create a Google+ Page

First to create your Google+ Business page, go to <https://plus.google.com/u/0/pages/create?hl=en&ppsrc=gpnv0>, and it will first ask you sign in with your Google account or create one if you don't have one. Once you do that, it will direct you to the "Choose business type" page. Here you will pick between three options: Storefront, Service Area, or Brand.



2. Locate Your Business

From there you will be asked to type in the name and location of your business, so Google can find your business. If Google doesn't find your business, simply just enter in your business's corresponding information.

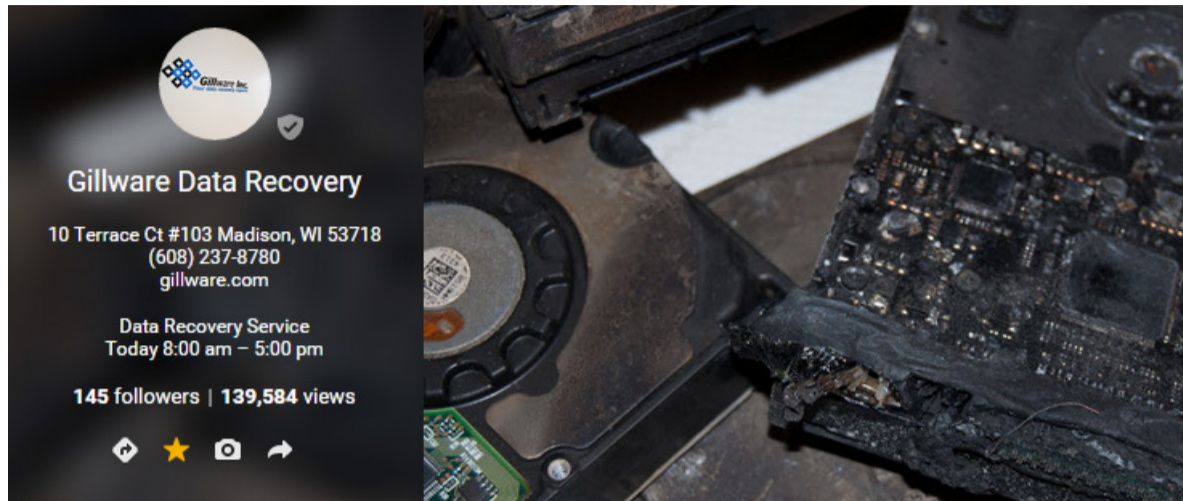
3. Verify Your Business

Once you have filled out the corresponding information, Google is going to ask to verify your location by sending you a postcard to your business's address. Once you receive that postcard, enter in the PIN Google sends you to verify your business.

Nothing will actually show until you verify, but in the meantime, you can still create the page.

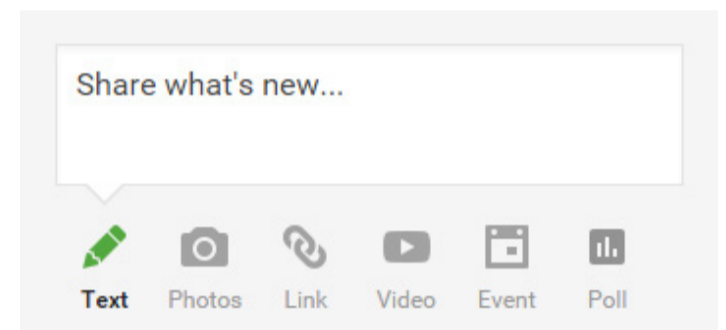
4. Enter Information and Upload Images

You will see your newly created page. Be sure to add your hours of operation, business description, and update the page's graphics.



5. Start Posting

Once you have entered all of your business's information and uploaded your logo, you can start looking at posts and creating them. It is somewhat similar to other social networks. You can share a post, video, photo, or link the post to something else.

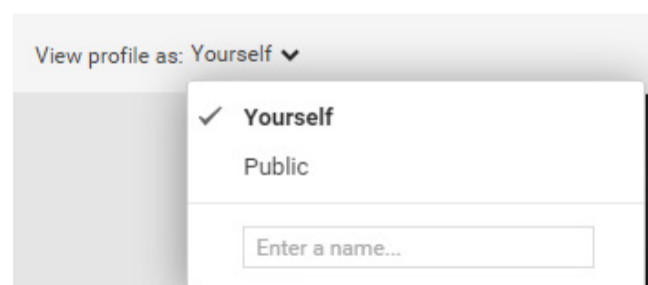


Tips for Maintaining a Google+ Business Page

Below are five steps to actively maintain your Google+ Business page. These steps are very basic and will help you grow your Google+ skills and knowledge in creating ongoing content that will help develop future leads.

1. Preview Page as a Different User

Use the "view profile as" feature to see how your Google+ Page would look to the public. You can also enter in a specific user to see how your page would look from that user's point of view.



2. Invite other Managers

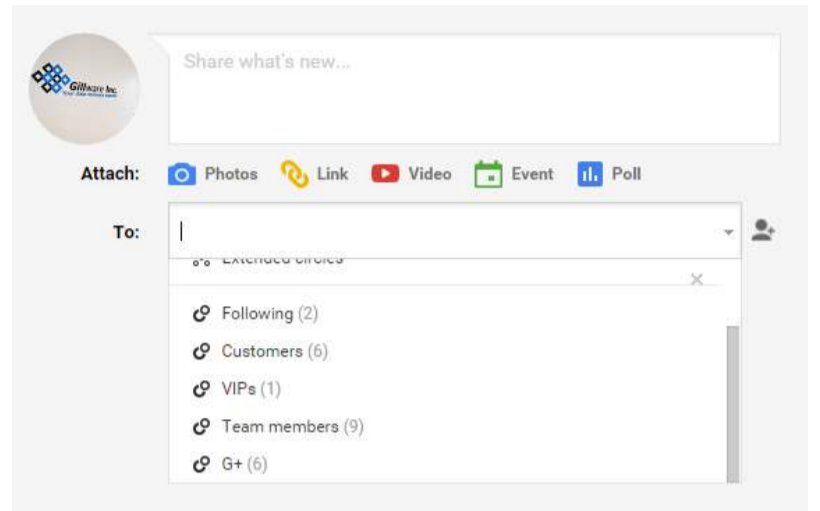
You can invite other team members to help manage your Google+ Business Page. This will help you shoulder the load of creating and sharing content on your page.

3. Use Hashtags

Just like Twitter, you can include hashtags to help make your posts more discoverable. The use of hashtags help put your content into specific conversations that are currently taking place in the Google+ network.

4. Share Content to Communities

Google Communities work similarly to LinkedIn Groups. They are an active place for creating and sharing content. You can start sharing content into these communities by adding the community. To do this, click in the "To" box where it says "+ Add more people."



5. Use Visuals

Google+ is known for its use of visuals. It is very easy to share images of various sizes, formats, and styles. Make use of these visuals to help users notice your content.

Google+ Paid Advertising

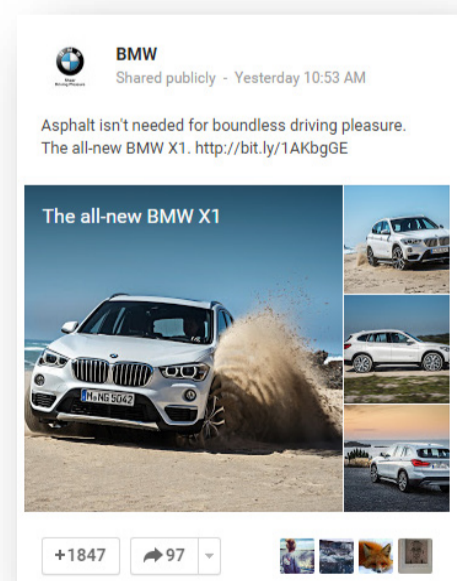
Reach

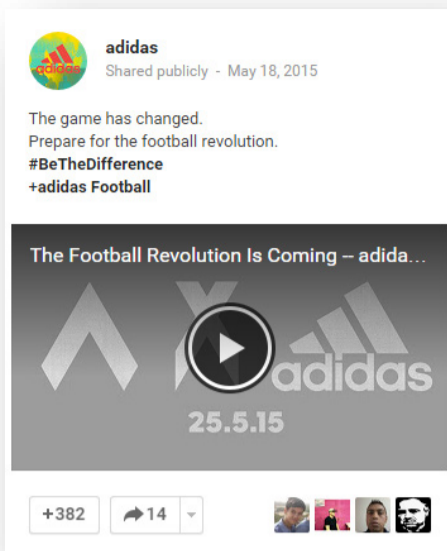
Unlike Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, it can be a little bit difficult to calculate the reach of Google+ from an advertising point of view. This is because of its integration with many of Google's other products. There are 300 million monthly active users, but this may not necessarily be Google+'s true reach. Google+ describes active users as those being "in the stream," which means that the true audience is a collective group of users on Google's other products.

This is not necessarily a negative though because Google+ has a unique advertising platform that can be viewable across the entire Google Display Network, which expands the advertisement's reach.

Advertising Format

There is only one advertising format that Google+ offers, and it is known as +Post ads. +Post ads are very flexible. Any content a company posts to Google+ can be directly turned into an ad. This includes text, images, and video. It is important to note here that +Post ads are separate from Google AdWords. That is a different advertising platform.





People can interact with +Post ads in the same way they can with a typical Google+ post from wherever the ad is displayed. Viewers don't have to be on Google+ itself to see the ad, which means that anyone who sees a +Post ad displayed on the Google Display Network can +1 the ad, same concept as "liking" on Facebook, leave a comment, and click on the ad. The fact that +Post ads are highly flexible and can be viewable from any site on Google Display Network makes this format very different from any other social network advertising format.

All of this sounds great right? Yes it does, but there are some drawbacks to this advertising platform. +Post ads cannot be created by just anyone. You have to qualify as a Google+ advertiser. To qualify, you must have at least 1,000 followers, ensure that your +Post ad has content that coincides with your audience, and have agreed to share endorsements for Google+ pages.

Targeting Options

The targeting options for +Post ads consist of contextual targeting (targeting that shows ads on sites related to specific keywords), placement targeting (targeting that shows ads on specific sites), remarketing, (targeting that shows ads to users who have previously visited your site), interest categories, topic targeting, geographic targeting, language targeting, and demographic targeting.

Cost

When determining the cost of a +Post ad, it is difficult to find a cut and dry amount like the other platforms. Since +Post ads are engagement ads that are served on the Google Display Network, Google charges you on cost per engagement, or CPE, basis. Keep in mind +Post ads are separate from Google AdWords, so their cost platforms will not be similar.

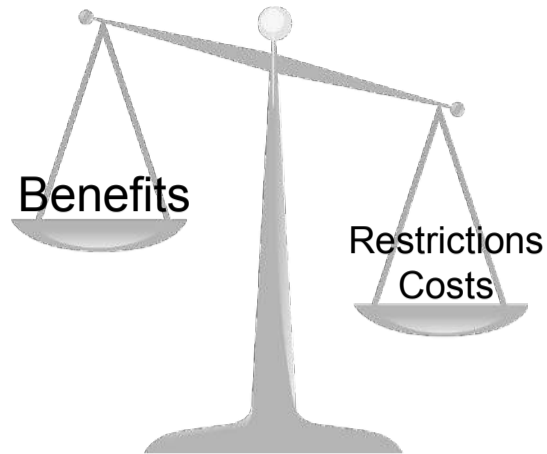
Pros and Cons

The unique flexibility and functionality of +Post ads is a great upside. It is unlike any other social network ad platform. Also Google+'s remarketing options make these ads a viable option. It gives you a great chance to recapture people that have visited your site before.

+Post ads do have many unique features, but its restrictions on who can create +Post ads is obviously a major drawback. If you don't have the correct amount of followers, you can't even take advantage of +Post ads, and as a smaller MSP, it would be difficult to gain 1,000 followers. Also, the potential costs of ads that reach high impression volumes could also create problems for limited marketing budgets.

Overall Assessment

In my opinion, I don't believe it would be worth it, as an MSP, to use +Post ads due to its potential costs and restrictions. I would recommend pursuing other options and allocating your budget to the other three social network platforms.



This doesn't mean that you should abandon Google+ entirely though. I do recommend creating a Google+ page for your service if you already don't have one. By establishing a Google+ page, you can take advantage of its "My Business" dashboard, which allows you to view your insights, which includes your number of views and clicks, reviews, where you can view all of your comments and ratings, and your YouTube subscribers and views.

CONCLUSION

There are endless tips and techniques for using each of these four social network platforms, but they all can be narrowed down to a few key takeaways: post valuable content, post consistently, and quickly respond to comments or concerns. If you do these three things with each platform, you will be able to jumpstart your presence in the fast-paced world of social media.

If you take advantage of the paid advertising options, you will see your presence grow even stronger. You will see more website traffic and leads. So get out there and start posting unique and valuable content within your industry.



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