

Business Social Media 101

By [Jennifer van Amerom](#)

There are many of us who make social networks a part of their daily lives so it is seemingly obvious that these networks, like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, be used for practical business purposes. Yet, as recruiters we still get a lot of questions from our clients about social media and how to effectively use it for business purposes.

Here's the reality. Many of us use LinkedIn as a professional tool, communicate on Facebook as an extension to their personal social lives and although we may have Twitter accounts, rarely use them. Thus, conveying the business significance can be challenging and confusing. Here are some basic ways to utilize social media for specific B2B activities.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a business-oriented network. Useful networking and information gathering tools are built right into the tool so that you can use it immediately with good results.

Here is how to use it for business purposes:

- Create a company group and add members. The easiest way is to get your employees to join the group. Don't forget family, friends and customers as well.
- List your business. You can list your company in the LinkedIn company directory for free. You can connect your profile and the profiles of your team members to the listing and provide news updates. Other business professionals can then follow your business to get the latest updates.
- Post discussion topic or links to interesting articles and comment on them and respond to discussion questions.
- Join other groups that are of interest.
- Get and give recommendations. You can also solicit recommendations from colleagues and clients to add testimonials to your profile.

Facebook

Facebook has more than 750 million active users. Some would undoubtedly make good clients or customers for you.

Here's how to use it for business purposes:

- Use Network, Group and Fan Pages.
- Start a group or fan page for your business.
- Add basic information to the group or fan page such as links to company site, newsletter subscription information and newsletter archives.
- Post upcoming events including webinars, conferences and other programs where you or someone from your company will be present and/ or presenting.

Add your contacts and start sharing your information:

- Post business updates on your wall.
- To establish credibility share useful articles and links to presentation and valuable resources that interest customers and prospects on your wall.
- Combine Facebook with other social media tools like Twitter. For example, when someone asks

question on Twitter, you can respond in detail in a blog post and link to it from Facebook.

- Establish a business account if you don't already have one.
- Post professional or business casual photos of yourself to reinforce your brand. Share pictures of business events to keep people intrigued and informed of activities your company participates in.

Twitter

Twitter can be a very effective business tool, but building the kind of following that will help your business and contains good quality followers will take time.

Here's how to use it:

- Follow people and businesses similar to you. It's likely that these people will follow you back.
- Follow people who your audience would be interested in.
- Tweet relevant and useful information.
- Retweet information that your followers would care about. This will help build your credibility
- Define your point of view and create a spark for conversation on the topic you are discussing.
- Be timely with your tweets.
- When you have something you need to get out to the public, you can tweet it out. The response you get will be corresponding with the quality of your following, of course.

Whenever you're promoting your business through social media, always remember:

Transparency, trust & credibility are key. Use consistent branding on all your profiles. Keep actively build your networks on all of your profiles. Be helpful, and give away free help without expecting to be paid. Share your progress on projects through blogs or on YouTube. Finally and most importantly, not all social media platforms make sense to reach your target market so pick and choose the ones that do.

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