

Bonus Materials for

Office DEPOT®

Maximizing Social Networking



How to Leverage Online Networks to Grow
Your Business the RIGHT Way



January 26, 2010

10 Steps for Getting Started in Social Media

LinkedIn

1. Complete your own profile and build a base of connections by searching for people you already know (always write a personalized invitation!)
2. Encourage every employee to build out their individual profile and network
3. Fill out company page info

Twitter

4. Decide on company account, individual account or both
5. Find people to follow (use search.twitter.com, find people by name)
6. Add Twitter account to website and e-zine to encourage followers

Facebook

7. Create a personal profile and link to Twitter or Ping.fm to feed status updates automatically

Productivity Tools

8. Feed blog posts to Twitter account through Twitterfeed.com
9. Set up RSS Feed for LinkedIn Answers in your area of expertise
10. Set up email digest for keywords and @replies in Twitter through SocialOomph

7 Steps for Maximizing Social Media

LinkedIn

1. Invite new contacts you meet to join your network
2. Get recommendations, give recommendations
3. Set up a schedule for asking/answering questions

Twitter

4. Increase number of followers and set up filters on Tweetdeck
5. Tweet daily (include variety in your posts)

Facebook

6. Set up company page and invite friends to join

Productivity Tools

7. As needed, schedule tweets through SocialOomph to stay visible

4 Must-Use Social Media Productivity Tools

Social networking can help you generate buzz and communicate with your target market, but it can be a major time sink the more involved you get. Fortunately, new applications are being developed to manage activity across sites and monitor information more quickly. Here are four free tools to help you save time and widen distribution of your social media content.

1) Ping.fm (www.Ping.fm)

Ping.fm allows you to update your status on numerous social networking sites simultaneously. Post from the web, your mobile phone or via email to over 30 sites including Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook. Ping.fm will even convert long URLs into shorter ones automatically.

2) Twitterfeed

Gaining additional distribution for your blog content is easy and automatic with Twitterfeed.com. Just register and provide the URL for your blog's RSS feed and Twitterfeed will create Twitter posts with the title and a shortened link to the full blog entry. You can set up feeds from multiple blogs as well as feeds to multiple Twitter accounts, as well as to a Ping.fm account to post automatically to other social networking sites.

3) Tweetdeck (www.TweetDeck.com)

If you follow more than a few dozen people on Twitter, it's hard to stay on top of relevant conversations. Tweetdeck is an Adobe Air application that allows you to filter and organize your Twitter stream. See incoming tweets, @replies, and direct messages (DM) all on one screen. Segregate your favorite tweeters into one group. Set up a keyword search to have all conversations across Twitter with that keyword automatically routed to you, including from those you aren't following, helping you

prospect for new clients or potential partners. You can post, reply and DM from within Tweetdeck as well.

4) SocialOomph (www.SocialOomph.com)

Formerly known as Tweetlater.com, this tool has a wide variety of uses. One is to pre-schedule tweets to post at specific times. Another is to monitor certain keywords in your industry. You'll get an email digest of all the tweets for the day, which can be valuable for prospecting. You can also set it up to monitor your name and get an email digest of all the people who mentioned you in a tweet, replied to you in a tweet. This way you can stay on top of important info without having to monitor everything live or be chained to your computer.

About Liz



As founder of the Center for Networking Excellence, and a top networking strategist and speaker, Liz Lynch has taught tens of thousands of professionals and entrepreneurs worldwide how to get 24/7 networking results WITHOUT the 24/7 effort. She's the author of *Smart Networking: Attract a Following In Person and Online* (McGraw-Hill, 2008) and has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, CNN, ABC News, Fox Business News, CNBC.com, Forbes.com and Businessweek.com. Liz holds an engineering degree from UC Berkeley and an MBA from Stanford University. To learn more about Liz, please visit www.SmartNetworking.com and download a free copy of her Smart Networking Toolkit.

Q&A Session for Maximizing Your Social Networking with Liz Lynch

Date: Tuesday, January 26th, 2010

Q: What are some best practices for a small business to integrate their local advertising with their social network efforts?

A: In your local advertising include a call to action for customers to follow you on Twitter and become fans on Facebook. On your social networking sites, provide offers to local customers to visit your store or try out your products.

Q: What is the primary demographic that uses Twitter and Facebook? It seems like they are different - why is that?

A: The fastest growing demographic on Facebook is 35-54 years old, but the largest group is still the college-age crowd. Here's a link to the latest report by istrategylabs (<http://www.istrategylabs.com/2009/01/2009-facebook-demographics-and-statistics-report-276-growth-in-35-54-year-old-users/>)

On the other hand, the largest audience on Twitter is 35+. There are different explanations as to why younger audiences haven't embraced it as much as Facebook. For simple interactions, they tend to rely more on texting, while for self-expression and sharing information, Facebook has many more features.

Q: If you reject a person's request to be added to your Facebook page, do they know you rejected their request?

A: You can confirm a friend request or ignore it. If you choose the latter, the invitation simply remains outstanding.

Q: It seems a photo is an important aspect of one's online profile. How important is it to have professional photos taken?

A: Studio shots aren't necessary, but you do want the photo to be flattering and clear. On LinkedIn you want to look professional, while on Facebook you have a little more leeway to show your personal side.

Q: What is your opinion of Facebook pay per click advertising? Does it yield results?

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Q: Is there danger in others seeing any negative feedback about your business on your Twitter page or Facebook wall? How is this best handled?

A: You don't want negative feedback to go unaddressed. You have the choice to delete it or respond to it openly and professionally. Always be sure to take the high road and avoid heated debates.

Q: What can be done about Facebook friends who post silly stuff on my wall? Will this hurt me from a business perspective?

A: I believe it hurts you more if you're the one doing the silly posting, but still, having a wall clogged up with "gifts" does detract from your brand presence, and hides the messages that you're trying to convey. Delete the posts, block the applications, and un-friend repeat offenders.

Q: I'm a little shy about asking for recommendations on LinkedIn. What's the best way to do this?

A: Ask people who truly know your work. Most people want to help, and if they agree, you can make their job easier by suggesting specific areas that they could write about. You can also ask connections who've already written recommendations for others since they are most likely to understand the importance and the process.

Q: Approximately how many man-hours would it require daily to make Twitters, LinkedIn or Facebook beneficial to grow your business?

A: It's not the time you spend but how you spend the time. Spending 10 minutes to make meaningful posts is more effective than 2 hours playing Scrabulous and sending virtual drinks to your friends. But to know what to post in those 10 minutes a day requires a clear strategy for who you want to target, what you want to say, and what you want others to know about you.

Q: Is there such a thing as too much interaction on a page? I have a law practice and post free business tips and blogs and articles everyday.

A: Social media success is all about interaction. It's great that you're adding content daily, and if people are engaged in what you are writing about and commenting on your posts, that's even better.

Q: In your postings, how much is too much about your accomplishments or project you're working on before it sounds like bragging?

A: There's a saying, "The people who matter don't mind and the people who mind don't matter." My experience with social media is that the community is very supportive and congratulatory. Be gracious and generous with your thanks and reciprocate when others have successes to share.

Q: I am considering adding a blog to my specialty retail online store, but is that really necessary with the available social networking sites?

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Q: Are there professionals who help you set up social networking and if so what do you look under to find that person? What is the usual rate for this service?

A: There's both a strategic and technical aspect to setting up and maintaining your social networking sites. "Strategists" should be able to help you figure out how social media fits into your entire business strategy so you can focus on the right things. "Technicians" will help you more on the design and getting the information into the site. The rates vary widely between the two, and even within each specialty, ranging from a few hundred dollars to several thousand.

Q: Liz, do you have any etiquette tips when engaging in social networking?

A: Yes, two key things. First, when you send an invitation to connect on Facebook or LinkedIn, be sure to write a personal note introducing yourself. Second, do not spam the profiles of your friends and followers with irrelevant links and frivolous applications. Remember there's a real person behind that profile. Don't do anything online that you wouldn't do face-to-face.

*Interested in speaking further with Liz about how to develop and implement a cohesive social networking strategy that accelerates YOUR business growth? To apply for a strategy session to discuss your goals and challenges, visit **HYPERLINK** "<http://www.networkingexcellence.com/>**consult**" <http://www.networkingexcellence.com/consult>.*

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