



10 Things To Do Right Now to Help Your Small Business

1. Sign up on Twitter

Sign up and reserve your account on Twitter. Even if you do not use the account immediately, you will have protected your intellectual property - your business (or personal) name.

2. Register on LinkedIn

Sign up with a personal account on LinkedIn. Set up and name your Public Profile. Add your Company information, too.

3. Determine your Social Media Goals

Are your customers using social media now? If so, you need to be there, and active, right now. If not, determine the level of involvement you want to commit to. Here is a list of possible uses for social media beyond interacting with (or expanding) your customer base:

- Increase number of incoming links to your website/SEO
- Raise brand awareness
- Cement reputation for excellence
- Search - for your brand, your competitors, best practices in industry at large
- Used for Customer Relations Management - Twitter is excellent for this because of real-time search
- Recruitment/Human Resources
- Network with industry colleagues, possible strategic partners
- Conduct market research - Twitter, for example, is becoming a huge repository of information
- Expand reach of your blog by feeding to social networking sites
- Establish expertise by being active in industry question/answer section
- Highlight current networking activities, such as Chamber of Commerce

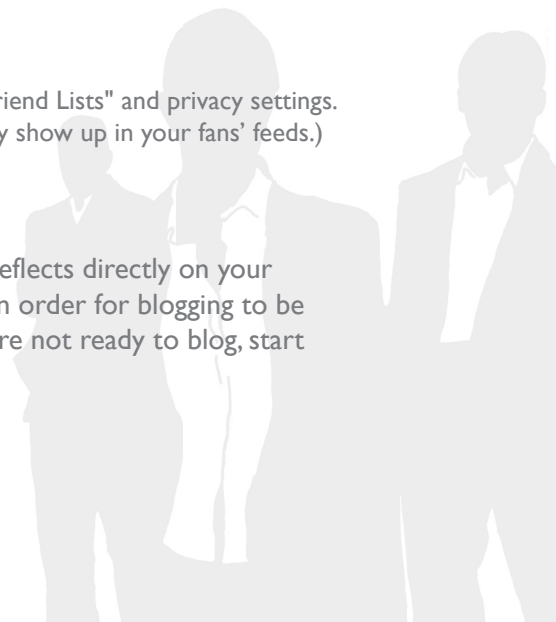
4. Facebook

Facebook is becoming an increasingly useful tool for making both personal and business connections. Eleven million Canadians have a Facebook account, and they all see Facebook ads, many of which are connected to a Facebook business page. Here are a few things you should do on Facebook right now:

- If you are not on Facebook, sign up.
- If you are on Facebook, go into settings and spend some time setting up "Friend Lists" and privacy settings.
- Set up a page for your business. (A page is better than a group, because they show up in your fans' feeds.)

5. Blog

Are you and your organization ready to blog? Remember, your blog reflects directly on your business and professionalism - make sure you have it designed right. In order for blogging to be effective, it has to be a part of your ongoing business routine. If you are not ready to blog, start with Twitter.





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6. Flickr

Set up a Flickr account if your business has visual interest, or can convey important information through pictures. Real estate, photography, graphic design, hairstyling, culinary arts, fitness, and many other fields can benefit from having a Flickr account. Some business owners use it to showcase their networking activity, even if their business is not visual by nature. Name your Photostream, and share your photos! Use these photos in blog entries or on Facebook. Link photos to Twitter to send out your greatest works, and add your best photos to photo-sharing pools on Flickr.

7. YouTube

Do you have any video media, i.e. television commercials, corporate videos, training videos, demonstrations, etc? Set up a YouTube channel under your name and upload your videos to share with the world. Video length is 10 minutes maximum, so a corporate video "highlight" reel would be better than a 30 minute show.

8. Glue It Together

Feed your blog, Flickr, and YouTube to your Facebook page, your LinkedIn page, and your Twitter stream. Never blog without announcing your blog to your friends, fans and the great wide Internet.

9. Connect

Find colleagues on LinkedIn, find interesting people to follow on Twitter (both in your industry, and customers within your industry), connect with people you know on Facebook - invite them to become a fan of your business page. Try out some of the third-party communication tools that you can use, such as a HootSuite, Seismic Desktop, Flock Browser, TweetDeck, etc. All have their pros and cons; find the one that works best for you.

10. Start Reading and Start Talking

Social Media is, by nature, "social". Interact with others, ask questions, and enjoy!

Here are a few social media blogs to subscribe to:

mashable.com
ideazone.ca/blog
readwriteweb.com
socialmediatoday.com
techcrunch.com
wordspring.ca
paulholmes.ca
poked.com

