

## How to Market in Social Networks

You know that social media is here to stay and you should be using it for your business but don't know where to start. Below is a brief outline of social media the more prevalent in social networks today, namely; LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.

### Facebook.com

**How to compare Facebook?** Think of the traditional community places of gathering like the post office, church hall and family/friend parties and that is close to what Facebook does remotely.

**Facts** [<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>] Facebook has been around since 2004 and currently boasts more than 500 million active users, with more than 250 million users logging in at least once each day. Add to the fact more than two-thirds of Facebook users are outside of college, with the fastest growing demographic those 35 years old and older. Basically users can create groups, announce events, post pictures, videos, and more to their social network. There are components designed especially for businesses including targeted advertising.

### Suggested Use

The suggested use for Facebook to start is to create a business page or fan page to develop a Facebook following where you can then share information about your business and invite customers to interact with you via video, blogs, photos, discussions, and events. Search one of the top companies in your field/industry on Facebook and see what they have – then develop yours.

### Twitter.com

[http://www.comscore.com/Press\\_Events/Press\\_Releases/2010/3/Facebook\\_and\\_Twitter\\_Access\\_via\\_Mobile\\_Browser\\_Grows\\_by\\_Triple-Digits/\(language\)/eng-US](http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Press_Releases/2010/3/Facebook_and_Twitter_Access_via_Mobile_Browser_Grows_by_Triple-Digits/(language)/eng-US)

**How to compare Twitter?** Think of the water cooler talk at the office, news stories, and other places people go to gossip or ask opinions.

**Facts** - According to Comscore, "30.8 percent of smartphone users accessed social networking sites via their mobile browser in January 2010, up 8.3 points from 22.5 percent one year ago. Access to Facebook via mobile browser grew 112 percent in the past year, while Twitter experienced a 347-percent jump." Twitter is growing in popularity thanks to the increasing use of smart phones.

**Suggested use** - What is it? In 140 characters or less you can talk about something relevant – for example a tweet by @hitconsultant "HHS Announces New Competitive "Early Innovator" Grants for States that Lead the Race to Develop IT Systems for S... <http://twurl.nl/xbxjuu>" Typically you can add in some personal items if they relate to you and your business i.e. news in the industry, breaking controversy, new products, events, blogs – items of interest. Some people talk about weird and wacky things you have no interest in but this isn't what you as a business person will focus on. Be current, be of value, and be open to listen to what your customers have to say responding appropriately.

### LinkedIn.com

**How to compare LinkedIn?** This is networking online; it is the online version of business mixers.

**Facts** - According to Comscore "LinkedIn currently has over 30 Million active users, it was launched in 2003 with just \$4.7 million in capital, but with over \$100 million raised to date, they are the most powerful networking site & turned over \$100+ Million in 2008."

**Suggested use** – This is a business networking tool that is online for those businesses that export, network internationally, and who look at best practices, this is a great resource. Also great for recruiters since many post profiles looking for jobs; however, partnerships, consulting opportunities and more are available too.

Small business, and for that matter, large businesses can find social media intimidating and don't know where to start.

Step 1 – Customer: Who your customer is and where they are – i.e. do they use social media?

Step 2 – Company fit: Will social media fit your industry/business? For example travel is definitely suited to social media, while senior's homes probably not.

Step 3 - Resources: Do you have the resources either financial or human resources available to commit to social media?

Step 4 – Marketing Plan fit: what does your marketing department or marketing agency think and what are their capabilities to support your efforts to start utilizing social media?

Step 5 – If at each step you said yes it is a go - then start the process – all the best.