



SOCIAL NETWORKING

Can you afford to be just average when it comes to advertising?

Here **Carol Anne Lowe** of Blue Moon Communications shows you how to grow your business through the use of Social Networking.

The Simple Guide to Social Networking for Business

Social Networking is the newest and fastest growing way to build your business. It's marketing without the spend! and in the future we will probably pay companies to do it for us. But for now, it's a no-cost advertising campaign that you can run from your laptop, where you want, when you want.

Establishing your name on social network sites will alert your current business fans that you've joined the 21st century and give you an opportunity to interact with others who could potentially be your customers of the future.

Social Networking increases your exposure to the opportunities that are seldom advertised and allows new contacts to learn about your business.

A Wise Investment

It's important to identify which social networking sites are best suited to maximising your business advantage. Remember that you shouldn't only pitch your brand to the people who are your business partners, so try to identify a good demographic consumer market too. Time spent testing in order to identify the best sites for your type of business and customer is a wise investment!

Focus Your Efforts

The trick to getting the best advantage from social networking is to find out which sites work for you! Once you've identified one or two that give you business leads or create a brand awareness with your customers... stick to them and focus your efforts.

Stick To Business

It's too easy to stray from the path. So don't waste time posting pictures, answering quizzes, and engaging in other fun stuff. Remember why you're on the site and stick to business.

Be Recognised As An Expert

Most social networking sites give you the opportunity to create a profile. This gives you an opportunity to provide necessary contact information and a Web site address. But most importantly it allows you to create a profile that positions your business specifically to this site's users and to market your skills so that you can become recognised as an expert.

Your Brand Of Professionalism

Remember that the photograph you use should be a photo that demonstrates your brand of professionalism.

List Your Keywords

Always remember that profiles on many sites are captured by search engines. So ask your website designer for the list of keywords that currently maximise your search Engine Optimisation and inject them into whatever profile you are creating for that site.. That way, as you create your profile you can also list your keywords.

Maximise Your Opportunity

Many social networking sites allow you to: Build a business page for news about your company; create an events page for your business activities or even establish a "Fan" page.

Whether you create podcasts; post videos; create special-interest forums; join groups or simply surface your blog posts on your profile page by using an RSS feed, there are lots of ways to maximise your opportunity

Start Writing

It's important to join groups and forums where you will best be able to offer expert comment. Commenting on blog posts and forums is one of the best things you can do online to grow awareness of who you are. By offering credible comments to a discussion forum, you can help position yourself and your organisation as having expertise in a given niche.

So the best way to start? Find a forum or group that you see as being of interest to your area of business, then, when you see a comment that you would like to agree with or offer an expert appraisal of... just start writing.

Greatly Impact Your Net Worth.

Social networking is the online version of good old fashioned person-to-person networking - but in many ways is much easier. People that you would normally have no access to or that you would like to meet or do business with are only an email away.

So seek out business contacts that could be valuable to you and send them a Facebook friend request or a LinkedIn networking invitation, accompanied by a message introducing yourself and politely explaining why you'd like to meet online. This is a great way to advance your business network and remember that the quality of your network can greatly impact your net worth.

Choose Your Friends Wisely

It is important to make 'friends' on Facebook and other social networking sites. But it's not the number you have that's important, but the value that each one holds for your business. So don't just go for the big numbers, go after the connections who can advance your business opportunity or simply put, choose your friends wisely.

Make Valued Recommendations

Writing recommendations for past colleagues or people you enjoy doing business with is a smart way to do business online. So be proactive! Don't wait to be asked to write them... offer. Only write great recommendations for people who deserve them and never write a negative comment. That way you'll be known as a positive influence on the site, you'll be associated with people who excel in their area of expertise and you'll be adding value to other peoples business when you make valued recommendations